

SOCIAL CHANGE IN KINSHIP AND MARRIAGE
AMONG THE YORUBA OF WESTERN NIGERIA

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MARY E.C. BIRD, M.A.

Department of Social Anthropology
University of Edinburgh

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INTRODUCTION

The Problem

An inevitable consequence of the European penetration of West Africa has been the initiation of changes of various kinds. Before the 19th century contact was restricted to a limited trading relation between European merchant and African middleman at certain points on the West African periphery. With the advent of the trader, the missionary, and the administrator new ideas and new values were introduced. In place of a gradual process of internal social development, changes became activated by external influences which often completely altered the configuration of indigenous life.

The thesis presents a sociological analysis of the changes apparent in the functioning of the basic traditional kinship unit of the Yoruba, a West African people living in South-western Nigeria.

The traditional Yoruba kinship system, in which men and women are affiliated in patrilineal descent groups, had great structural importance. Political authority and political relationships were channelled along the lines of the lineage structure. Economic resources were controlled by the lineage as a corporate group.

The/

The ritual life of the community was closely bound up with the lineage. The training of the young was the affair of the kin group. In short, kinship organisation, local grouping, political, religious and economic organisation, all tended to coincide.

The presence of Europeans and the inculcation of their values and beliefs, the opportunities for accumulating wealth afforded by the introduction of a cash economy, and the imposition of a British political administration have profoundly affected the traditional social structure. In the traditional situation it may be taken as a postulate that no major institution is completely unaffected by the kinship system and there are few situations in which participation is independent of kinship status. Now a new social organisation has emerged with its basis no longer in kinship but in common interests of an occupational, religious, political, educational or social kind. There has been a restructuring of social relations which has modified the role of the lineage and a far greater part is played by non-kinship agencies such as state, political party, church, school, business firm, professional and voluntary association of one kind or another.

The/

The process by which such agencies become of prime importance in the social structure inevitably attacks the prominence of the lineage as a structural component and entails the loss of many of its traditional functions (cf. Little, 1953). It no longer engages in economic production; it is not a major primary agency of education; it is no longer the unit of political representation; it is no longer a religious congregation. Although members of the lineage participate in all these activities, they do so as individuals, not in their roles as members of a kinship group.

Perhaps the most significant example of the process of functional specialisation is afforded by the remarkable change in the status of the domestic group in its relation to the lineage. In the following discussion I shall therefore deal more fully with this than with the other aspects of functional specialisation.

The Approach

The general problem to be discussed here is one involving changes in the functioning of the traditional Yoruba system of kinship and marriage in the light of contemporary circumstances. It has been suggested that such a set of circumstances might/

might usefully be regarded not as a problem in 'culture contact', nor in terms of 'detrribalisation' or 'Westernisation', but structurally as "an historical process of adaptation to new conditions" (Little, 1957a, p.955). Such a formulation of the problem leads logically to a consideration of Max Weber's methodology. In his analysis of capitalism, for example, his problem was not the elucidation of the specific facts of historical sequence, but the definite isolation of the most important variable elements and the demonstration of their significance by studying their operation under variant conditions.

But where Weber looked for the psychological conditions which made possible the development of capitalism, the variant conditions with which I am concerned are of a different order. The main characteristics are an individualisation, specialisation and segmentation of roles together with an emphasis on the contractual aspect of social relationships. To these characteristics I shall apply the term "urbanism". Thus this term is used here with reference to social relationships and not to population enumeration. It is generally recognised that the nature of social relationships vary from simple to complex societies and several attempts/

attempts have been made to construct conceptual typologies, having regard to this fundamental dichotomy.¹ What is unusual about the Yoruba is that they are a demographically urban-dwelling people, but as far as the qualitative nature of their structure and relationships is concerned the traditional pattern is essentially non-urban - a kind of rus in urbe.

A further, temporal, distinction may be drawn between Weber's material and that which is being considered here. His was a diachronic study. The problem concerns the contemporary Yoruba scene with its lack of cultural homogeneity. In one sense, therefore, it is a synchronous study. Nevertheless, a Weberian type of analysis is possible if one considers the changes as occurring in a situational rather than a temporal dimension.

In discussing the system of kinship and marriage the description will be of a total situation in which two different sets of norms prevail. Here also a Weberian instrument of analysis/

¹Cf. Tönnies' Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft; Redfield's folk-urban continuum; MacIver's community and association; Maine's status and contract; Durkheim's mechanical and organic solidarity; Linton's ascribed and achieved status.

analysis will be used: the formulation of ideal types, that is, the description of normative patterns of behaviour. The ideal type is a conceptual recognition of a general tendency for certain formal characteristics to vary together. It is recognised that, while such an approach is of great value in bringing out the characteristic differences between the types, nevertheless it does in a sense do violence to behavioural reality. But without this a clear exposition would be impossible, in view of the complexity of present-day Yoruba society. These ideal structural types may be identified by the terms lineage and conjugal. That is to say, in the traditional kinship system the lineage is the dominant structural principle while the emerging system lays stress on conjugal solidarity. Because of the ambiguity of the term 'family', I shall try to avoid its use, replacing it with lineage, domestic group or kin group in the appropriate context.

The material for the work was collected during 15 months' study in the field between October 1955 and December 1956. Research was carried out under the direction of Dr. K.L. Little and financed by funds made available by/

by U.N.E.S.C.O., the Carnegie Trust and the Noel-Buxton fund. The main centres of field-work were Ibadan and Abeokuta. Most of the Ibadan work was carried ^{on} /in the course of a U.N.E.S.C.O. project of research into female élites in which I was assisting. Ibadan was selected as the growing centre of the new administration and economy of the Western Region of Nigeria and as a place where the modern trends in behaviour are most easily observed. In September 1956 I moved to Abeokuta. It was considered advisable to collect some comparative material and Abeokuta was chosen because of its long standing contact with Europeans and because of the prominence of many of its sons and daughters in the new élite groups. It should be noted that the Yoruba do not form one homogeneous group but comprise a number of closely related groupings. There have always been slight cultural and social variations amongst these groupings. Thus the ethnographic data gathered at Ibadan and Abeokuta differ in certain respects, nor can they be accepted as entirely true of other areas.

The sophistication of the Yoruba and the growing nationalism made them rather wary of the anthropologist. Gradually, however, a certain degree of trust and friendship replaced the initial/

initial non-committal politeness. Nevertheless certain restrictions were imposed on me. There was, for example, the difficulty involved in counting. In the first place, to count a person's possessions, children or money creates the risk of bad luck or witchcraft. Secondly, counting is regarded with suspicion as the prelude to taxation. In these circumstances I considered it unwise to jeopardise rapport in the short time at my disposal by attempting to obtain quantitative data. The methods I employed, therefore, provided qualitative results. I also found that shortage of time and pressure of work on the part of my Yoruba informants made it difficult to gather much information by direct observation. Free or informally directed interviews, friendly discussions on topics of interest and the collection of life-histories became the principal methods used. Most of the work was conducted with English speaking informants and though this implies an arbitrary sampling it enabled the building up of a greater degree of intimacy than could communication through an interpreter. Where translation was necessary bilingual acquaintances obliged.

Preview

Part I presents a preliminary introduction to the Yoruba, their country and their history and provides a perspective within which the contemporary situation may be viewed.

In Part II the traditional systems of religion, education, political organisation and economic organisation are examined in turn, together with the changes which have occurred in each sphere and the resultant systems. In each case there is a change-over from a situation where the lineage is the organisational unit to one where kinship affiliation is of no significance in the organisation of the emerging systems.

Part III describes the traditional system of kinship and marriage. Lineage solidarity is structurally the most important principle and relationships with other, non-lineage, kin, with spouses and with affines are subordinated to it.

In Part IV the modern trends in kinship and marriage are described. The tendency is for the solidarity of the conjugal unit to become preponderant at the expense of the lineage. The day-to-day organisation of life and the procreative aspects of marriage are no longer seen in the context of the maintenance of the lineage, but become autonomous functions/

functions of the domestic group.

Part V comprises a discussion of the general situation and a summary of the conclusions reached.

PART I BACKGROUND

Atlantic Region

The Atlantic Region is the westernmost of the three regions of the country. It is bounded on the west by the Atlantic Ocean, on the north by the Sahara Desert, on the east by the Sahel, and on the south by the Gulf of Guinea. The region is characterized by a hot, dry climate and a landscape of savanna and desert. The population is sparse and the economy is based on subsistence agriculture and herding.

SECTION 2. YORUBALAND

Climatic Regions

Vegetation Zones

Agriculture

Demography

The Yorubaland region is the central and largest of the three regions of the country. It is bounded on the north by the Sahel, on the east by the Sahel, and on the south by the Gulf of Guinea. The region is characterized by a hot, dry climate and a landscape of savanna and desert. The population is dense and the economy is based on subsistence agriculture and herding.

1954, p.156. Fajana, 1952, p.14-15. Fajana, 1951,

Climatic Regions

The land occupied by the Yoruba lies on the west coast of Africa on the shores of the Gulf of Guinea. Although there is very little relationship between the territorial distribution of the Yoruba and modern arbitrary political units, politically Yorubaland is almost entirely within the Western Region of Nigeria, although sub-groups may be found in certain of the Fulani-dominated kingdoms of the Northern Region such as Ilorin and Kabba, and to the east in the French territory of Dahomey and Togoland. To the west it is bounded by the kingdom of Benin. (Cf. Burns, 1948, p.25.)

Yorubaland lies roughly between the parallels of 6° and 9° north of the Equator. The coast is fringed with swamp, lagoons and sand-bars, the two last forming a system of protected waterways useful for inter-coastal communication. The port of Lagos is situated at one of the few fair-sized gaps in this sandy reef. From the coast the land rises gradually to a plain about 650 feet high extending nearly 40 miles inland and ending a little south of Abeokuta and Ondo. Beyond these limits the land continues to rise until it reaches the high plateau of the interior. (Cf. Forde, 1934, p.150. Fadipe, 1940, pp.32-3. Forde, 1951, p.5/

p.5.)

Taking climate and vegetation as criteria of natural divisions there is a marked latitudinal bias. Beyond the coastal belt of marsh and mangrove lies a region of equatorial régime characterised by constant high temperatures,¹ high humidity² and heavy rainfall³ with two distinct maxima occurring about May-June, and September-October. Warm moist south-westerly winds from the Atlantic are experienced all year round but they increase in intensity during the summer period and are weakest and penetrate only a short distance inland during January and February/

¹ At the coast the mean maximum temperature is about 87°F with the highest maximum temperatures occurring from February to April, the lowest in July and August. The mean minimum temperature is about 72°F and is generally highest in March and April and lowest in August. The mean daily range of temperature is not usually more than 15°. (Nigeria Handbook, 1953, pp. 5, 10.)

² Near the coast the maximum relative humidity is between 95% and 100% throughout the year with only slight seasonal variation. Northwards from the coast the relative humidity decreases steadily. (Nigeria Handbook, 1953, p. 10.)

³ The heavy rains occur between April and July with a season of lighter rains from August to October. Annual totals vary from 70-100 inches at the coast to less than 50 inches on the plateau. (Forde, 1934, p. 151. Forde, 1951, p. 5.)

February. (Fitzgerald, 1955, pp. 33, 36-8, 323. Colonial Office Report, 1955, p. 127.)

During the period from November to May the prevailing winds blow from the north-east bringing hot dry air from the Sahara. This north-eastern current is known as the Harmattan. Its influence increases with distance from the coast and the length of the dry season increases inland, the equatorial belt merging into one which shows a marked dry season. In this belt the rainy season lasts from June to October with a single maximum occurring about July-August. (Fitzgerald, 1955, pp. 38, 49.)

Vegetation Zones

The east-west trend of climatic belts is associated with a similar vegetational zoning. Immediately behind the mangrove swamp the equatorial rain-forest stretches northwards. The principal trees of economic worth are the oil palm and a few which produce furniture wood of the mahogany type. The equatorial rain-forest merges into tropical forest where the existence of an appreciable dry season results in many deciduous trees. This belt is the source of most of the kola-bearing trees and contains the main Nigerian cocoa/

cocoa producing areas. North of a line through Abeokuta and Ondo the forest begins to get thinner giving place to open, park-like savanna with sporadic trees. (Burns, 1948, pp. 16, 17. Fitzgerald, 1955, p. 40.)

Agriculture

For most, the chief source of livelihood is the land. Among its products are bananas, sugar-cane, maize, yams and cassava. Cocoa, kola-nuts and a little tobacco are cultivated commercially. (Fitzgerald, 1955, p. 42.) The cocoa belt lies within the provinces of Oyo, Abeokuta, Ondo and Ijebu. (Fitzgerald, 1955, p. 365.) The cocoa is grown by the African farmer and although cultivation has only been seriously undertaken since 1920, exports have risen from 3,600 tons in 1913 to 121,478 in 1951. (Colonial Office Report, 1955, p. 31.) Virtually the whole of the crop is exported, accounting for more than half the total value of exports. The change-over from a subsistence to a cash crop economy has been responsible for an economic revolution of great importance. The social implications of this new economy will be discussed in Section 8.

The presence of the tsetse fly makes stock/

stock-rearing of minor importance although fowls, sheep, goats and so forth are found in most villages. The Western Region is almost entirely dependent on the North for supplies of fresh meat and many hundreds of head of cattle are imported annually. Dried meat is also brought from the Northern Region in substantial quantities. During 1952-53, for example, 189,593 coops of dried meat entered Ibadan. (Colonial Office Report, 1955, pp. 47-8.)

Most of the farming is done by the men,¹ while the women help with the reaping and busy themselves generally with housework and cooking, preparing surplus produce and carrying it to the local market to trade. In general, care of domestic livestock also devolves upon them. (Cf. Forde, 1951, p. 6.)

Demography

The Population Census of Nigeria 1952-53 gives the following figures (Nigerian Census, Table 6):

Western/

¹ The hoe and cutlass are the traditional farm implements. (Cf. Johnson, 1921, p. 118. Fitzgerald, 1955, p. 115.)

	<u>Yoruba</u>	<u>Total</u> (in thousands)
Western Region (December 1952)	4,302	6,085
Northern Region (July 1952)	536	16,835
Lagos Township (December 1952)	192	267
Eastern Region (June 1953)	11	7,215
Southern Cameroons (June 1953)	1	735

giving a total of over 5 million Yoruba out of a total Nigerian population of $31\frac{1}{2}$ million. Few figures are available for Yoruba enclaves elsewhere, such as in the French territories of Dahomey and Togoland.¹ As may be seen, the proportion of Yoruba in the Eastern Region and the Southern Cameroons is very small. In the Northern Region the Yoruba are mainly concentrated in two provinces (Nigerian Census, Table 6):

	<u>Yoruba</u>	<u>Total</u> (in thousands)
Ilorin	367	531
Kabba	115	664

In the Western Region and Lagos Township the population is predominantly Yoruba. Lagos, the metropolis of Nigeria and the Federal capital/

¹ Estimates of Yoruba in Dahomey:

Cercle of Porto-Novo	c.90,000
Ketu	10,028
Cercle of Savalou	55,566
French Togoland	c.13,000
(Forde, 1951, p. 3.)	

capital, attracts many of diverse tribal origin but it is ethnically a Yoruba city with bonds of kinship and interest with the Yoruba hinterland. Politically Lagos is distinct from the Western Region: otherwise it is an intrinsic adjunct, relying on the Region for resources of man-power and trade and acting as an important channel of cultural penetration.

The Yoruba Provinces of the Western Region and Lagos Township have the following land areas and population densities (Nigerian Census, Table 2):

	<u>Square Miles</u>	<u>Total Population (in thousands)</u>	<u>Population per square mile</u>
Lagos Township	27	272	10,070
Western Region: ¹	45,376 ¹	6,087 ¹	134
Abeokuta	4,266	630	148
Colony	1,354	238	176
Ibadan	4,521	1,651	365
Ijebu	2,456	348	142
Ondo	8,162	945	116
Oyo	9,695	783	81

This table shows the great pressure on land/

¹ Including the two mainly non-Yoruba Provinces of Benin and the Delta.

land in Lagos Township. It also indicates the presence of some factor in Ibadan Province which affects the average density. This factor is the existence of Ibadan town with a population of 459,196.

Within the Western Region and Lagos, the Census shows that the number of males per 1,000 females is as follows (Nigerian Census, Table 2):

Lagos Township	1,041
Western Region ¹	973
Abeokuta	966
Colony	1,023
Ibadan	1,011
Ijebu	923
Ondo	950
Oyo	966

The numbers of females in excess of the numbers of males is relatively of little significance and the figures seem to suggest that the widespread belief among Yoruba that there are an inordinate number of spare women is a fallacy, although/

¹ Figures for the two mainly non-Yoruba Provinces of Benin and the Delta have been omitted, although the average for the Western Region as a whole includes these figures.

although one well-suited to the arguments of the apologists of polygyny.

It is of interest, and perhaps of importance, that the three exceptions to the general preponderance of women in the West, as indeed in Nigeria as a whole, are Ibadan, Lagos Township and the so-called Colony which, although now politically part of the Western Region rather than of Lagos, lies well within the sphere of influence of the township.

These three areas where the numbers of males are greater than females coincide with the two major conurbations of Nigeria. Lagos and the Colony form the political and economic heart of the country. Lagos is the Federal capital and an important port through which pass most of the exports and imports of the whole country. Ibadan, with its population of nearly half a million, is the largest African town south of the Sahara. In its short history it has always had a large population. Now political developments have made it the capital of the Western Region and it is the seat of the Regional Legislative, Judiciary and Executive. With the separation of Lagos from the West, new economic developments are also under way and these involve the transfer of much commerce and/

and business activity from Lagos to Ibadan.

There are thus two centres, Lagos and Ibadan, offering to the man from the country new opportunities of education, employment, advancement or, simply, excitement. The tendency seems to be for men to migrate from the rural areas to these urban areas in search of economic improvement and new amusements. The components of this new mobile population may alter but it is predominantly masculine. The women follow later. This phenomenon is world-wide and seems to be one of the concomitants of a period of economic expansion and industrialisation.

Although there is at present a tendency for migration to the large centres the Yoruba are traditionally an urban-dwelling people and have long been renowned for the size of their towns and for the fact that they were already organised in large urban communities when the first European missionaries arrived. The marked pattern of urban settlement associated with the political structure may have been reinforced during the period of wars and slave-raiding by the need for mutual protection. (Fitzgerald, 1955, p. 366n.) There are five towns with populations of more than 100,000, namely (Nigerian Census, Table 9):

Ibadan/

Ibadan	459,196	(1952)
Lagos	267,407	"
Ogbomosho	139,535	"
Oshogbo	122,728	"
Iwo	100,006	"

five with populations between 40,000 and 100,000:

Abeokuta	84,451	(December 1952)
Oyo	72,133	" "
Ilesha	72,029	" "
Iseyin	49,680	" "
Ede	44,808	" "

and nearly twenty of between 20,000 and 40,000.

The position as regards vital statistics is best summed up in the following extract from the Colonial Office Report on Nigeria for the year 1953 (1955, p. 10).

"There are no accurate vital statistics except for Lagos.¹ The recorded Lagos figures indicate that in the last twenty-five years (during which period the population of the town has doubled), the average death rate has fallen from 20 per 1,000 to 17 per 1,000 while the average birth rate has increased from 29 per 1,000 to 44 per 1,000. The death rates given are believed to understate the true rates. On the other hand, some of the considerable increase in the birth rate was no doubt due to fuller registration of births which took place in Lagos and to the registration of children born outside the boundaries of the township. Infant mortality fell during the same period from an average/

¹ Registration has been in operation in Lagos since 1867 (Nigeria Handbook, 1953, pp. 20-1).

average of 154 to 105 per 1,000 live births and the average percentage of still births to live births from 3.6 per cent to 3.1 per cent."

It should be noted, however, that enormous changes have taken place in the population, the area and the composition of the town (Nigeria Handbook, 1953, pp.20-21). Even the Lagos figures quoted, therefore, while doubtless showing significant trends, may well be unreliable.

The following figures refer to occupations in the Western Region and in Lagos (Nigerian Census, Table 5):

	<u>Western Region</u>	<u>Lagos</u>
Males	3,144,364	143 thousands
Agriculture and fishing	1,158,071	4 "
Crafts	129,869	11 "
Trading and clerical	166,249	21 "
Administrative, Professional and Technical	70,133	16 "
Other Occupations	157,001	32 "
Other males not working	1,463,041 ¹	59 "
Females/		

¹ Males younger than 15 years in the Western Region number 1,540,912 (Western Region Census, 1952, Table C); in Lagos 36,541 (Lagos Census, 1950, Table 13).

	<u>Western Region</u>	<u>Lagos</u>
Females	3,208,108	124 thousands
Agriculture and fishing	1,187,692	3 "
Trading and clerical	453,438	33 "
All other females	1,566,978 ¹	88 "

Information about occupations can only be regarded as approximate. This is especially so in the case of females, a large proportion of whom combine trading with their ordinary household work. The great majority of Yoruba are peasant farmers working on their own farms. Although the number of posts in Government service, commerce and in secondary industries is expanding at a great rate, some 36.8% of male persons described themselves in the 1952 census as engaged in agriculture or fishing. It must also be kept in mind that most men retain rights to lineage land and may combine their nominal pursuit with farming as a secondary occupation. The largest group of employed persons are Government servants. (Nigeria Handbook, 1953, p. 21.) There are also a very considerable/

¹ Females under 15 years of age number 1,453,792 in the Western Region (Western Region Census, 1952, Table C); 35,928 in Lagos (Lagos Census, 1950, Table 13).

considerable number of men working for small employers, while a number specialise in traditional crafts such as metal-work, weaving, wood-carving, bead and leather work. The number of women in paid employment remains relatively very small. Their main opportunities are still in nursing and teaching, and for training in those professions an increasing number of those leaving school are going to the United Kingdom. Otherwise women and girls are employed mostly as clerks, telephone operators and shop assistants. There are a few exceptions where women are employed in the manufacture of soap and cigarettes, and in canning. The great majority of women, however, remain pre-occupied with domestic duties, and in both towns and villages petty trading activities are monopolised by them. In addition some are engaged in crafts such as weaving, dyeing and pottery.

Yoruba Origins

There is no definite knowledge of the origins of the Yoruba although there have been much speculation. Leo Kuper (1911) put forward the theory that Yorubaland was the fatherland of the mysterious Atlantis and that its civilization was Egyptian. Talbot (1903) also put forward a theory that the Yoruba were a branch of the Egyptian race who arrived in Nigeria from Egypt about 1000 B.C. and made Ibadan their capital (Talbot I, 1903, pp. 12, 13). The Yoruba themselves have two traditions of origin of which many variations occur. According to one, the first is given the honour of being the spot where the Supreme Being created man. The earth was originally covered with water and the Supreme Being, who was a deity, came down to the earth. From which came a priest named Ogun who brought with him some food, a cock and a palm-leaf. The cock

SECTION 3. YORUBA HISTORY

Yoruba Origins

The Creation

The Great Trek

The Yoruba Kingdoms

The Decline of the Yoruba Empire

British Occupation

The Creation

The Yoruba themselves have two traditions of origin of which many variations occur. According to one, the first is given the honour of being the spot where the Supreme Being created man. The earth was originally covered with water and the Supreme Being, who was a deity, came down to the earth. From which came a priest named Ogun who brought with him some food, a cock and a palm-leaf. The cock

Yoruba Origins

There is no definite knowledge of the origins of the Yoruba although there has been much speculation. Leo Frobenius (1913) put forward the theory that Yorubaland was the far-famed and mysterious Atlantis and that its civilisation was Etruscan. Talbot sees an early Egyptian influence and conjectures, none too precisely, that the sub-tribe now known as the Oyo probably arrived in Nigeria from the north-east between 2000 and 1000 B.C. and made Ile Ife their capital (Talbot I, 1926, pp. 19, 276). According to the same authority, a further band of invaders penetrated the area about the 8th or 9th century A.D. and supplied the ruling dynasty of Oyo (Talbot I, 1926, pp. 28, 278).

The Creation

The Yoruba themselves have two traditions of origin of which many variations occur. According to one, Ile Ife is given the honour of being the spot where the Supreme Being created man. The earth was originally covered with water but Olorun, the Supreme Being, let down a chain to the earth, down which came a priest named Ojumu who brought with him some sand, a cock and a palm-nut. The cock/

cock scratched the sand over the whole earth to form dry land; the palm-nut was planted and produced a palm-tree with sixteen branches, traditionally said to symbolise the sixteen foremost obas or kings. Another version of the story relates how Oduduwa was sent down after Ojumu. He descended at the spot where Ile Ife now stands, accompanied by sixteen elders, the archetypes of the sixteen obas. (Cf. Johnson, 1921, pp. 9, 15. Talbot I, 1926, p. 276. Burns, 1948, p. 25.)

The Great Trek

The second tradition suggests that the Yoruba originated in the East, a "remnant of the children of Canaan, who were of the tribe of Nimrod" (Johnson, 1921, p. 5). After being driven from Arabia to Africa by Yaa-Rooba, the son of Kahtan, they set off on their wanderings. At each stopping-place they left a tribe of their people. Finally they settled in their present land. (Johnson, 1921, p. 5. Talbot I, 1926, p. 278. Burns, 1948, p. 25.) Another variant of this describes them as descendants of Lamurudu, one of the kings of Mecca. His son, the Crown Prince Oduduwa, apostatised from Islam to idolatry and after a civil war between the dissident faction/

faction and the orthodox Moslems the former were vanquished and expelled. After many wanderings they settled at Ile Ife (Johnson, 1921, p.3).

Oranyan, the son of Oduduwa, had seven children and these were the progenitors of the Yoruba and certain associated tribes (Johnson, 1921, p.7. Talbot I, 1926, p. 278).

Johnson suggests that Lamurudu is a dialectic variant of Nimrod and he goes on to deduce from these traditions (Johnson, 1921, pp. 6-7):

- "1. That they (the Yoruba) sprang from Upper Egypt, or Nubia.
2. That they were subjects of the Egyptian conqueror Nimrod, who was of Phoenician origin, and that they followed him in his wars of conquest as far as Arabia, where they settled for a time . . .
3. That from Arabia they were driven on account of their practising there their own form of worship, which was either paganism or more likely a corrupt form of Eastern Christianity"

There are no authentic data to support these traditional versions but Yoruba scholars appear to accept the hypothesis that the Yoruba were part of a general migration from the north-east.¹ It may be that, as indigenous traditions teach/

¹ Cf. Biobaku, 1957, p.1. The resurgence of a feeling of nationalism among the Yoruba is demonstrated by the provision in 1956 of a total of £40,000 by the Western Regional Government for research into the origins and the history of the Yoruba.

teach, Ile Ife was in fact the first settlement of the Yoruba in their present country. At Ile Ife may still be seen the supposed grave of Oranyan, the mythical second king (Johnson, 1921, pp.11-12. Burns, 1948, p.26). Either in his time or during the reign of the now deified Sango, the fourth king, political authority shifted to Old Oyo or Katunga, then about 80 miles north of the present town of Oyo.¹ The town of Ife remains the spiritual headquarters. Its ruler, the Oni, is the religious head of the Yoruba and the custodian of the holy city and the relics it contains (Johnson, 1921, p.11. Talbot I, 1926, p. 279). The Alafin of Oyo, on the other hand, is the temporal overlord of all the Yoruba rulers, although in recent times his authority is more nominal than real.

The Yoruba Kingdom

The Yoruba are not one homogeneous tribe but comprise a cluster of related groups, which occupy adjacent territories, speak mutually intelligible dialects and have a similar, although not identical, culture. Different authorities/

¹ Talbot advances the hypothesis that this transfer took place about 1000 A.D. V. Talbot I, 1926, p.30.

authorities vary in their statements of the number of major sections, but the most prominent seem to be Egba, Egbado, Ijebu, Oyo, Ife, Ijesha, Ondo and Ekiti.¹ All of these trace their origin from Oduduwa and the city, Ile Ife, and validate their claims by myths relating the founding oba to Oduduwa's line (Johnson, 1921, p.16).

These sections were grouped into a loose confederation of kingdoms under the suzerainty of the Alafin of Oyo. In internal matters each was virtually autonomous, but was under an obligation to send tribute to the Alafin of Oyo and to provide an army when required by their overlord (Fadipe, 1940, p.104). The government was in the hands of the local ruler, or oba, and his advisors. The extent of sectional autonomy and importance varied from time to time.

The/

¹ V. Talbot IV, 1926, p.25. Burns, 1948, p.25. Forde, 1951, p.2. In addition to the Yoruba, certain peoples are acknowledged as connected. To the East the Itshekri are often classified as an ancillary Yoruba group on grounds of a certain linguistic relationship (Talbot IV, 1926, p.53). To the West, Yoruba groups in French territory include Sabe and Ketu (Biobaku, 1957, p.2), while in the Northern Region are the Yagba and the Igbomina (Fadipe, 1940, p.84).

The Decline of the Yoruba Empire

In early times Yoruba influence in the surrounding kingdoms was extensive but it had already begun to decay by about 1700 (Burns, 1948, p.26) although the Yoruba were able to capture the chief city of Dahomey in the 18th century and to exact the payment of tribute from that country from 1729 till the early part of the nineteenth century.¹ (Talbot I, 1926, pp. 40, 285.)

Until the beginning of the 19th century the authority of the Alafin of Oyo had not been seriously disputed by any of the subsidiary kingdoms although the allegiance of their rulers was becoming increasingly nominal (Talbot I, 1926, p.41). Owing to the growing weakness of the central authority and the increasing independence of the provincial kingdoms the Fulani invaders from the north were able to take advantage of the dissolution of Yoruba cohesion (Johnson, 1921, p.199. Talbot I, 1926, pp. 44, 290). Afonja, the Yoruba ruler of Ilorin and a man of high military rank within the Oyo empire, revolted with/

¹ Cf. Dalziel's History of Dahomey, 1793, which records that tribute was paid by the kingdom of Dahomey from about 1700 until 1840 (p.15).

with the aid of his Fulani mercenaries from allegiance to the Alafin (Fadipe, 1940, p.107). About 1821 (Talbot I, 1926, p.30) he was killed by his Fulani soldiers and power was seized by his Moslem Mallam, Alimi (Burns, 1948, p.27). Alimi was followed by his son who established the first Fulani Emirate (Johnson, 1921, p.262). The Ilorin Fulani began to make continual incursions into Yoruba territories. Meanwhile the other Yoruba kings now asserted their independence and ceased to pay tribute to the Alafin of Oyo. (Talbot I, 1926, pp. 42,290).

From this time there was continuous fighting, both internally among the Yoruba sub-groups, and externally against the Fulani. The enduring state of emergency and the capture and the destruction of many towns led to much movement of population. When the small village of Ibadan was made the military encampment of a mixed Yoruba army in about 1825,¹ the original inhabitants, who were of the Egba sub-group, prudently withdrew southwards under the leadership of/

¹ According to Talbot, Vol. I, 1926, p.130. Biobaku (1957, p.17) suggests that the main body of the Egba moved to Abeokuta about 1830, while Ellis (1894, p.12) gives the date of the founding of Abeokuta as 1838.

of Sodeke (or Lisabi). They settled at Abeokuta where their numbers were gradually augmented by the arrival of other Egba remnants. About 1831 they were joined by the dispossessed Owu. (Johnson, 1921, pp. 94, 225. Talbot I, 1926, pp. 44, 130, 292.)

In about 1835 the Fulani captured and sacked Old Oyo (Talbot I, 1926, pp. 47, 296. Burns, 1948, p.27). Oluewu, the Alafin, was summoned to Ilorin to pay homage as a vassal of the Emir, compelled to embrace Islam and treated with indignity. (Ellis, 1894, p.12. Johnson, 1921, p.259. Fadipe, 1940, p.107. Burns, 1948, p.28.) The Yoruba tried to retaliate but although a large army assembled, the Yoruba leaders were not united and the Fulani inflicted a crushing defeat on them. (Cf. Johnson, 1921, cap.13.) The Alafin was killed; Old Oyo was deserted; and the defeated Yoruba fled before the victorious invaders who over-ran the country as far south as Abeokuta (Talbot I, 1926, p.296). From that time until the firm establishment of Pax Britannica the Fulani to the north - and also the Dahomeans to the east - were ever-present dangers and launched repeated attacks against the Yoruba kingdoms. The disintegration of the Yoruba confederacy/

confederacy was now complete (Johnson, 1921, p.206. Burns, 1948, p.28). There was no central authority. Instead of uniting against their external enemies, the Yoruba began to wage war upon each other. There was a constantly changing pattern of alliance and counter-alliance, alignment and re-alignment. Fighting and slave-raiding prevailed intermittently for nearly seventy years (Colonial Office Report, 1955, p.130) and, whatever the original reasons for such fighting, nearly all the wars received added impetus from the existence of the overseas slave trade. (Fadipe, 1940, p.119.)

The early known history of the Yoruba is concerned almost exclusively with the northern sections. In the latter half of the 19th century the position became reversed (Johnson, 1921, pp. xxii, 40). The centre of interest and the sphere of influence moved southwards aided by the advent of the white man and the development of the slave trade. It is in the light of the demand for slaves on the coast and the threat of Moslem conquest from Ilorin that the disruption of Yorubaland should be regarded. (Biobaku, 1957, p.13.)

Although the 19th century wars brought great hardship upon many of the Yoruba people they created/

created the wealth of Lagos. From about 1815 to the date of British annexation in 1861 thousands of prisoners were captured and taken to Lagos to be sold in the slave market. Large fortunes were made by the merchants who exported this valuable commodity. The ruler of Lagos exacted his tax on the profits and the town grew rapidly in wealth and importance. (Talbot I, 1926, p.43. Burns, 1948, p.36.)

British Occupation

In 1807, Parliament passed legislation outlawing British participation in the traffic in human beings. As most of the other nations took no action against the slave-trade (although the Danes anticipated the British legislation in 1802) the immediate result of the British Government's action was merely the transfer of the profits to merchants of other nationalities. (Burns, 1948, pp. 72, 97.) In any event legislation is a very different matter from enforcement. The American demand for slaves was still great; the profits were well worth the risks and the chances of evading the Royal Naval patrols stationed on the West Coast were high (Burns, 1948, p.99). A more effective means of/

of implementing the legal restrictions imposed on slave-trading was sought. In 1851 Lord Palmerston, the Foreign Secretary, authorised John Beecroft, the British Consul at Fernando Po, to intervene in Lagos (Burns, 1948, p.114). At that time the ruler of Lagos was Kosoko, who had deposed the previous ruler, Akitoye, and usurped his throne (Burns, 1948, p.112). Kosoko refused to forego his countenance of the slave-trade; a British force stormed Lagos; and Akitoye was re-installed as ruler (Talbot I, 1926, p.51. Burns, 1948, pp. 117-8). In return for British protection, Akitoye was quite willing to sign a treaty formally abolishing the slave-trade in Lagos (Burns, 1948, p.119).¹ Docemo (or Dosunmo), the successor of Akitoye, proved recalcitrant in this respect and in 1861, because of the intensification of the slave trade, he was obliged, under protest, to accede to the British annexation of Lagos (Talbot I, 1926, pp. 62, 118. Burns, 1948, pp.120-122). In 1862 it was formally taken over and was administered by a Governor (Burns, 1948, p.129). Four years later, in 1866, it was included in the West African Settlements under a Governor-in-Chief who was/

¹ 1st January 1852. (Biobaku, 1957, p.46).

was resident in Sierra Leone (Burns, 1948, p.129). In 1874, yet another change brought it under the jurisdiction of the Governor of the Gold Coast (Burns, 1948, p.130). In 1886 it regained its separate identity as a Colony with its own Governor (Burns, 1948, p.130).

Meanwhile in the rest of Yorubaland British influence was steadily extending (Burns, 1948, p.195). The original intention had been to stop with the annexation of Lagos. However the subsequent development of trade made pacification of the interior groups necessary. The general state of chronic warfare made communications difficult. Routes were continually being blocked; trade was dislocated and when it was brought to an almost complete stand-still the authorities felt called upon to intervene (Burns, 1948, p.129). In 1886 arbitrators¹ were appointed by the Governor of Lagos and they succeeded in bringing about a truce in the internecine warfare that had been in intermittent progress for more than half/

¹ The Reverend Samuel Johnson, a Yoruba who acted on several occasions as the Government's intermediary in peace negotiations and who is famous for his History of the Yoruba, and the Reverend C. Phillips, another African clergyman, were sent at the preliminary stages but later three European officials conducted the actual negotiations (Burns, 1948, p.129).

half a century (Talbot I, 1926, pp. 67, 123. Burns, 1948, p.195). This was not the end of the trouble. There were still occasional clashes among the various sections of the Yoruba. International considerations also supervened and in 1888 - in order to forestall the French and prevent the Yoruba hinterland falling into their possession - a treaty was signed with the then Alafin of Oyo, by the terms of which the whole of Yorubaland was placed under British protection (Burns, 1948, p. 195). In 1891 vigorous measures were initiated to end renewed disturbances and to bring Yorubaland under British control. One consequence was the downfall in 1892 of the Ijebu who were forced into submission and into making a pledge that there would be no further restriction of trade (Burns, 1948, p.196). The next year, 1893, Governor Carter signed a treaty with the Egba providing for freedom of trade through Egba territories and recognising Egba independence (Talbot I, 1926, pp. 67, 123. Burns, 1948, p. 196). A further treaty was also concluded with the Alafin of Oyo which in effect established a British Protectorate (Talbot I, 1926, p.312. Fadipe, 1940, p.117. Burns, 1948, p.197). In 1897 the forces of the Royal Niger Company attacked/

attacked and captured Ilorin (Burns, 1948, p.198). With the removal of the Fulani threat the whole of Yorubaland was pacified and taken firmly under British control. In 1901 it was attached as a Protectorate to the Colony of Lagos (Talbot I, 1926, p. 73).

In 1906 Lagos and the Southern Protectorate were merged under one administration and designated the "Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria", with Lagos as the seat of government (Talbot I, 1926, p. 73. Burns, 1948, p. 201). In 1914 a further unification took place when Northern and Southern Nigeria were amalgamated (Talbot I, 1926, pp. 75, 128, 152. Burns, 1948, p. 202). For purposes of administration it was sub-divided into three portions, the Colony (practically identical with Lagos) and the Northern and Southern Provinces. The Nigerian Council was established but was given no legislative or financial powers. In the same year, to put an end to the anomalous position of the Egba State as an independent enclave, the 1893 treaty was abrogated and Egba was incorporated into the Protectorate (Burns, 1948, p. 205).

SECTION 4. THE LIFE CYCLE

The Compound

Fertility

Pregnancy

Birth

The Naming Ceremony

Names

Preparation for Marriage

Premarital Sex Relations
and Age of Marriage

Choice of Partner

Betrothal and Marriage

Atypical Forms of Marriage

Extent of Polygyny

Marital Fidelity

Stability of Marriage

Old Age

Death

Status of Widows

Inheritance

Succession

Summary

The two previous sections have laid the groundwork for a detailed consideration of the Yoruba situation by their account of the environment and history of the Yoruba people. In this section I shall present a brief description of the life-cycle of a Yoruba man or woman living under traditional circumstances - the residential patterns, the ceremonies attending birth, marriage and death, and so on. While the details of customs and ceremonies may vary from one subgroup of the Yoruba to another, the following account, which is based mainly on my observations in Ibadan and in the Egba town of Abeokuta, includes most of the significant elements.

The Compound

Each town is divided into blocks of land and these blocks are the property of the agnatic kin groups, or lineages, which make up the citizenry. Each lineage owns a block of land and upon this is built the official lineage residence, the compound or agbo ile. This comprises a long low mud building roofed with thatch or, nowadays, sheets of corrugated iron. (Cf. Colonial Office Report, 1955, p.81.) This building is constructed around a large rectangular piece of ground/

ground. Along the inner side of the compound runs a veranda sheltered by the over-hanging eaves of the roof. It is here that much of the activity of the compound takes place. Entrance to the compound is through a single gateway built in the middle of one of the sides. Immediately opposite the gateway are the apartments of the head of the compound. These are sometimes graced by an ornate gable or adorned by carved posts. The rest of the compound building is divided into a number of rooms, each of which is ascribed to one of the inhabitants of the compound. Adjacent rooms are occupied by a man, his wife or wives, and their children. (Cf. Forde, 1951.)

This group of a man, his wives and their children is the basic domestic and economic unit. It may include an aged or infirm parent or a younger sibling of the man. Although the lineage is the land-holding unit, it is this domestic group which is the farming unit. Land is assigned to each man and he, together with the other able-bodied males in the group, cultivates it. The father is the head of the group: he is responsible for its internal management and answerable for the misconduct or misdemeanour of any of its members.

A number of such domestic groups, claiming descent from a common ancestor, may occupy neighbouring parts of the compound and may associate under the headship of the most senior man of the inclusive group. The head of this extended family group may perform ritual on behalf of its members. His authority extends over all the group in their internal and external relationships. In actual fact, the reality of his authority depends to a large extent on the man himself. Each constituent domestic group is economically independent and internally autonomous. If difficulties arise which cannot be solved within the domestic group itself, the matter may well be referred directly to the compound head who is, after all, readily accessible, rather than in the first place to the head of the extended family unless the latter is a man of forceful personality.

A number of extended families comprise the inhabitants of the compound. Compounds may house from 50 to 500 people, the size being a rough index of the antiquity of the lineage and of its importance. The compound head, the bale, is usually one of the most aged men in the whole lineage. He is chosen by lineage members in terms of age, seniority and ability. He is the/

the final arbitrator in internal compound and lineage disputes: appeal to a higher authority must be to the ruler himself (cf. Ajisafe, 1924, p.39). The compound head is the administrator of lineage property and lands; he is responsible for the well-being of lineage members and for their good behaviour (cf. Ajisafe, 1924, p. 3); and it is his duty to assist any of them who requires financial aid. He is also the representative of the lineage vis-a-vis the rest of the town. In his capacity as head of the lineage, he is a member of the council which runs the town ward in which his compound lies. If the lineage is large and influential he may be the holder of the title associated with that lineage, and a member of the ruler's council of chiefs.

There are, then, two orders of grouping - the lineage and the compound. The first is a structural conception which, through considerations of incest and exogamy, is modified into the second, residential, reality. The element common to both is the permanent male nucleus. Membership of the compound, unlike membership of the lineage, is not strictly hereditary. Marriage is patrilocal. Female lineage members leave their natal compound when they marry, to live/

live in that of their husbands. Wives of the male lineage members come into the compound. But a woman never becomes a member of her husband's lineage: she always retains her affiliation to the lineage of her father.

Fertility

High social value is placed on begetting children and procreation is considered to be the chief end of marriage (cf. Ward, 1938, p.41). A woman must therefore establish her fertility as soon after marriage as possible. If conception does not take place within the first year recourse is had to the gods, to medicines and to oracles. It is believed that it is always the woman's fault if no child is forthcoming. Both she and her husband will make a considerable outlay to cure her of the disreputable malady of unpregnancy.

Witchcraft is, of course, one of the most likely causes to which infertility may be attributed, and jealous or malicious co-wives are the most likely practitioners. At her first menstruation a girl is given a menstrual cloth, aso idigo, and this she guards carefully for, in the wrong hands, it is a potent weapon to prevent conception or induce abortion (cf. Talbot II, 1926/

1926, p. 181).

Details about the average number of children in a domestic group are difficult to obtain. There is a very strong feeling against enumerating one's children (cf. Talbot IV, 1926, pp. 2, 144). To do so is to call the attention of an evil spirit. As a consequence ill luck or even death may befall the children. It is a breach of etiquette to enquire how many children a person has.¹

I was able to obtain information on the number of live births in only one compound. The sample of 27 women - who were all wives of the compound - ranged from a very new bride to several aged grandmothers. The following figures represent the number of children who were born to each and survived parturition. I could get no reliable details of miscarriages, still-births or neonatal deaths.

No./

¹ If this dangerous question is asked by an ill-bred and ignorant stranger the reply will be vague and inaccurate. Even among highly educated men and women the answer will be in terms of an approximation, "about four children" - an attempt to reconcile their sophisticated disbelief in 'superstition' and their culturally induced apprehension.

No. of children per mother	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9	12
No. of cases	6	9	5	0	3	1	1	1	1

Table 1

Enquiry amongst a sample of 100 school-children elicited data regarding the number of each child's full siblings (same father, same mother). Table 2 cannot, by the nature of the sample, give any indication of women with no children.

No. of siblings	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	No in- formation
No. of cases	28	17	20	14	5	5	1	2	8

Table 2

The limiting factors in the production of many children may be either antenatal or postnatal. Taking into account the fact that sexual intercourse between a man and his wife is forbidden while the latter is suckling a child, that is, for a period of at least 14 months after parturition, and assuming optimum fertility in both man and wife conception should, under traditional circumstances, take place every two or three years. Even in cases where this does occur, however, the incidence of malnutrition, malaria and other diseases interferes and many pregnancies are involuntarily terminated/

terminated prematurely (cf. Ward, 1938, p. 45). Secondly, should a woman bring her pregnancy to a satisfactory conclusion the chances of her child's survival depend a great deal upon environmental and economic circumstances. The rate of infant and child mortality - although declining appreciably with the improvement in hygiene, sanitation and medical facilities - is still high, especially in inaccessible country districts.¹ Much money is spent/

¹ Talbot (1926, IV, p.145) estimated that only half of those born reached adulthood. Of 6 of the 27 cases mentioned above (Table 1) the following figures give some idea of the deaths in childhood and early adulthood.

Size of Family	No. Surviving
12	6
9	1
6	3
5	4
4	2
2	1

Table 3

That is, out of a total of 63 children born to 21 women (six, it will be remembered, had no children) 42 were surviving at the time. These figures, while statistically very unreliable, give some indication of the high odds against attaining adulthood. However, in a personal communication, a medical officer estimated that an infant born in Nigeria now has double the expectancy of survival than one born only 10 years ago.

spent on medicines - native and pharmaceutical - and recourse is had to doctor after doctor - traditional and modern. Nor are the remedies sought by anxious parents only curative: preventative medicines are bought and nearly every child one sees in the rural areas, whether of Christian, Moslem or pagan parents, is wearing some kind of protective talisman or amulet. In spite of all these measures and precautions infant mortality is still high. The ever-present threat to the survival of their children is a source of great anxiety and of great sorrow. Many women relate harrowing tales of successive miscarriages or of the loss of two, three or more children through the machinations of an enemy or a spirit.¹

Pregnancy/

¹ It must not be thought that all spirits are malevolent, although their interests may not coincide with those of the living. It is said that a dead relative, perhaps an aunt or a grandparent, may so love a child and long for its company that the child's life is placed in jeopardy. The child realises that it is being called to the land of the dead by a number of signs: the dead person may, for example, appear to the child in its dreams on several successive nights. The parents of course know what this portends. A priest or native doctor is called in for consultation. Suitable medicine is made and inserted into cuts on the child's body. This, it is hoped, will discourage the deceased's attentions. Another species of spirit called abiku (born to die) is also thought to endanger a child's life. Should a child die through no fault of its parents but because of abiku it may be re-incarnated at several successive births. Thus if a woman has lost a number of children at birth or at an early age, the cause is held to be abiku. When another child is born to her every step is taken to prevent its death. Medicine is made and inserted into incisions on the child's cheeks. Belts, rings and chains are put on the child and it is given a name such as Malomo (do not go again).

Pregnancy

Pregnancy is a time of great danger and one when a woman is especially prone to attack by malignant influences. From the moment of conception she takes precautions. She behaves with great caution in all situations, taking care to offend neither man nor god. All the correct ceremonies must be performed: all the requisite sacrifices offered (cf. Talbot II, 1926, p.163). She seldom ventures out at night but if this is unavoidable she arms herself against the machinations of the ill-intentioned by carrying a sharp instrument, made preferably of iron, which has certain ritual attributes. Some even take this weapon to bed. Most pregnant women are given medicines by native doctors to help them during pregnancy and to make delivery easy and untroubled (cf. Talbot II, 1926, P.354). From the day that pregnancy is recognised sexual intercourse between the woman and her husband is forbidden and this proscription lasts until the child is finally weaned - an event which may take place any time between fourteen months and three years after birth. (Cf. Ward, 1937, p.33. 1938, pp.45-6).

Birth/

Birth

At birth the woman is attended by some of the old and expert women (cf. Talbot II, 1926, p.354). These may be some of the elder women from the husband's compound or some of her own relatives. Her mother usually comes to stay with her for about thirty days at this time. Birth normally takes place in the husband's compound (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.159). No men are present. According to traditional custom the woman who is about to deliver squats down on the ground, bracing herself against another woman standing behind who holds her shoulders. Two other women grasp her thighs to help ease the delivery. The manner of the baby's birth is carefully noted. If, for example, the child is born in a caul, it is later given the name Aina. If twins, ibeji, are born the last to make its appearance is the senior sibling and is named Kehinde, he who lags behind, while the first-born is called Taiwo, the first to taste the world, and is the junior. (It is a Yoruba custom that a precursor must always herald the coming of an important person.)

After parturition the woman is washed and oil is rubbed on her abdomen which is then bound tightly with a cloth (cf. Talbot II, 1926/

1926, p.355). The child is also bathed and rubbed with oil. The father takes the placenta and cord and buries these in a gutter in the compound, usually under the eaves of the roof where water may run over them (cf. Talbot II, 1926, p.350).

The mother and the infant remain in seclusion until the day of the naming ceremony. During this time the child, if male, will be circumcised. There is little ceremony made about this and no precautions taken apart from the application of certain medicinal leaves to heal the wound (cf. Talbot II, 1926, p.390). At the same time the boy will receive certain cicatrices which take the form of long gashes on the cheeks. These marks are found in a number of well-defined patterns which occur in conjunction with particular lineage names, orile, (cf. Talbot II, 1926, pp.390-1, 397). As it happens that many lineages in a town may have the same orile, certain face marks have become associated with specific towns. A man's place of origin may often therefore be determined by looking at his marks. As the face marks depend on lineage membership it follows that a child will be given the marks of his father's lineage. Exceptions do, however, occur when/

when the mother's lineage is very powerful, in which case hers are sometimes adopted instead.

During this period of seclusion, if the child is a girl, her ears will be pierced.¹

Formerly girls were also subject to a total or partial excision of the clitoris, and certain scarifications were made on their abdomen.²

This practice is now on the decline although it occurs in some of the less accessible rural areas. Many women now attending hospital for the birth of their children suffer from obstructed labour due to the scar tissue formation resulting from these childhood operations.

Also in the first week of life the esentaye (feet touch the world) ceremony takes place (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.154). It is a private family affair with only close kin present. The/

¹ Many years ago boys' ears were also pierced, but this practice has fallen into desuetude. Men of at least forty years of age from the Ogbomoso district are the last to demonstrate this feature.

² Among the Ekiti clitorodectomy was performed at any time from 3 months to 3 years of age (cf. Talbot II, 1926, p.390). Fadipe (1940, p. 162) suggests that sub-incision of the clitoris was sometimes deferred until a short time before marriage. In such cases the fiancee was required to provide payment for doctor's bills, for medicine and for sacrifice.



The feet of the child are brought ritually into contact with the paraphernalia of the Ifa oracle¹ (cf. Ellis, 1894, p.152). The oracle is then consulted to discover if the child is the re-incarnation of a deceased kinsman, if there is any prohibition he must observe during his life or if he is to worship a particular deity.

The Naming Ceremony

The day on which the naming-ceremony (ik'omo jade or outing of the child) takes place varies. If the child's parents are Moslem it is held on the eighth day after birth; otherwise it is held on the seventh day if the child is a female, the ninth if it is a male (cf. Johnson, 1921, p.79). (It is believed that woman was created with seven bones, man with nine.) Up until the day of the ceremony both mother and child are confined to the room in which the birth has taken place. The naming ceremony marks the end of the confinement when the mother will once more be free to move about, go to market, and so on.

The/

¹ The Ifa oracle is a form of divination performed with certain nuts which the priest casts onto the floor. He then recites verses customarily associated with the particular configuration formed by the nuts.

The naming ceremony is usually held early in the morning at the father's compound. There the child's relatives, paternal and maternal, and many friends assemble. The mother and the child are brought out of the house, and water taken from one of the pots connected with collective lineage worship is thrown on to the roof. As the water runs down the eaves the mother runs three times through the falling drops with the babe in her arms (cf. Talbot II, 1926, p.350). An elder woman, a member of the father's lineage, then takes up in turn a piece of dried meat, a piece of dried fish, some palm oil, some salt and a few kola nuts. These represent the good things of life. The old woman places each upon the lips of the infant, bidding it savour what life has to offer and remain with them in this world, not to return to the land of the spirits. When the parents are Christians the local minister may be present at the naming ceremony. The christening itself usually takes place on the first Sunday after the ceremony.

The next stage in the ceremony is the actual naming. As any kinsman or friend may give the child a name the number is potentially unlimited. The name by which an individual is most/

most commonly addressed is, however, that given by the father or the father's father after consultation with the Ifa oracle. Starting with the most senior person present, each in turn pronounces a name and drops a sum of money into a bowl of water. Some may not in fact give the child another name but will repeat one already bestowed, using the words oruko a m'ori o.

As with most Yoruba ceremonies, this is the occasion of feasting and revelry which is continued throughout the day and well into the night.

Names¹

According to traditional Yoruba usage there are three kinds of names which may be borne by the individual, the oruko, the oriki and the orile. Not all of these are obligatory.

The oruko, or personal name, may be sub-divided into two categories, the amutorunwa and the abiso. The amutorunwa is an optional name given in view of outstanding circumstances of birth. Such names include Taiwo and Kehinde (junior/

¹ For this sub-section I am principally indebted to Johnson, 1921, cap.V, pp. 79-89.

(junior and senior twin), Idowu (child born immediately after twins), Oke (child born with the membrane unruptured), Babatunde (father returned, that is, child born soon after the death of its grandfather).

The second type of oruko, the abiso, all must have. This name refers directly to the fortunes of the child itself or of its lineage, or it may refer to the particular deity worshipped by the lineage. Examples of abiso are Adetoyobo (the crown returns from Oyo), Fabunmi (Ifa has given me this).

The oriki is an attributive pet-name, that is, it expresses a quality which it is hoped will be manifested by the child or the fortune which will be its lot. Generally it is this name which is used by elders to address a junior person. It is familiar and endearing and it would be the height of presumption for a junior to address his senior by the latter's oriki. Among oriki are names like Amoke (one whom to know is to love), Aduke (one who should be petted).

Finally, there is the orile, the so-called totem name. This is the lineage name and is closely associated with lineage membership. A child, therefore, takes the same orile as its/

its father.¹ Just as a woman can never become a member of her husband's lineage, neither can she ever adopt her husband's orile. Johnson (1921, p.86) states that formerly marriage between members of lineages bearing the same orile was not allowed as coming within the proscribed category of consanguinity, although at the time he wrote (about 1897) the rule was not rigidly observed. Although the orile has been described as the totem name of the lineage, there appears to have been no taboos associated with it among most of the Yoruba. Among the Ekiti, however, certain prohibitions are connected with the orile. For example, members of the Edun (monkey) orile are forbidden to eat the flesh of monkeys. (Cf. Talbot II, 1926, pp. 256-7.)

A person's full name comprises the oruko, oriki, and orile. This is a complete means of identifying the individual. Generally, however, he is known by his oruko, familiarly by the oriki; the latter implies endearment or admiration and is always used in conjunction with/

¹ In a few cases where a child's mother is of a very important or noble lineage the child may adopt the orile of the mother's father. The child of an unmarried woman will also take the orile of its mother's father.

with the orile which is never used by itself.

A Moslem child has in place of an oruko a name of Arabic origin, together with the oriki and the orile. The advent of Christianity and British example caused a serious dislocation in the traditional naming system. Missionaries frowned upon the use of so-called heathen names. The question of prestige also influenced the adoption of English names or the use of oruko or oriki as surnames on the English pattern.¹

Preparation for Marriage

There is no formal initiation ceremony among the Yoruba. Circumcision and clitero-dectomy occur within the first weeks of life. At the appearance of a girl's first menstruation, the girl's nearest relatives will stage a small ritual to mark the event. Apart from this there seems to be no other social recognition of the boy or girl's new condition. Nor does the advent of puberty coincide with any period of instruction/

¹ This has gone so far that some of the modern educated young men and women of Lagos do not know the meaning of the Yoruba term, orile. On the other hand, nationalism is, among other things, reversing the process of the anglicisation of names and many are renouncing English names, which their fathers or grandfathers adopted, in favour of authentic Yoruba names.

instruction in the facts of sex or marriage.

Premarital Sex Relations and Age of Marriage

Premarital chastity is the ideal, nor are there any permitted sexual relations between an engaged couple. Formerly before marriage there was a period of complete avoidance by the young girl of her fiancé, or indeed of any of his relatives. It was incumbent upon the girl to run and hide herself if she saw them approaching or to veil herself if a meeting was inevitable and could not be prevented. In the traditional farming community a young girl is married soon after her physical development testifies to her nubility. In preliterate communities where age is not reckoned in years but by relative position in the family and by physique, it is difficult to state categorically the normal age of marriage. I should estimate that the approximate limits of the age of marriage of a young girl might be between sixteen and nineteen. As marriage in a traditional community tends to follow very closely on a girl's puberty she will have little opportunity to conduct any premarital affairs.¹ The age at which/

¹ Ward (1938, pp.31-2), however, suggests that the majority of girls have premarital sexual experience.

which a man first marries varies according to material circumstances. If his father, his mother, or other kinsfolk can subsidise his marriage, or if he himself is in a position to do so, he may marry at 19 years. On the other hand, if money is not forthcoming, he may have to postpone his marriage. It is rare, however, for a man under traditional conditions to remain unmarried beyond the age of 30.¹

Choice of Partner

Yoruba marriage in its traditional form is essentially a collective contract or an alliance between two kin groups rather than a union of two individuals. Formerly, the element of personal choice was lacking although a young man or young woman had, it is averred, the right of refusal (cf. Ward, 1937, p. 19). There is no type of prescribed or preferential marriage. However, marriage/

¹ Fadipe (1940, p.165) suggests that 30 years is the usual age unless the man's mother is rich. He also quotes from Dr. J.G.S. Turner's Census of Nigeria, 1931, Vol. VI, "Medical Census, Southern Provinces", that a young woman did not at that time get married until the age of 20 (op. cit., p.75). Elsewhere (op. cit., p.168) he states that girls might in some cases marry at 15 or 16. Johnson (1921, p.103) states that the age of marriage for a man was seldom less than 30 years, for a woman about 20 years.

marriage within the sub-tribal group is desired and encouraged. Marriage to a member of a different Yoruba sub-tribe is regarded with a certain unease (cf. Ward, 1937, p.13), while marriage to a non-Yoruba person is considered with distaste and displeasure (cf. Ward, 1937, p.12). It is claimed that marriage is proscribed between members of any lineages which have ties of consanguinity or affinity of any degree (cf. Ward, 1937, p.10). This bar to marriage between kinsfolk operates bilaterally, that is, matrilineal relationship is as equally cogent a deterrent as is patrilineal. An indication of this will be seen in the bilateral use of the kinship terms which will be described below. Another source (Lloyd, 1955a, p.240) states that exogamy is operative to a depth of four generations - a limitation which would render the members of fifteen lineages other than one's own ineligible as spouses. Whether in fact this ideal was ever achieved is doubtful. For one thing a pre-literate community might find the research necessary to discover distant relationships difficult. At the same time a small community would very quickly become highly inter-related and if the rules of exogamy were kept in their most/

most pristine form, marital sorties on to external sources would become a recognised necessity.

Where kith and kin become largely undifferentiated a village exogamy must result. In certain of the Yoruba sub-tribes this does in fact occur. The Egbado group are among the least urbanised of the Yoruba and their wives are sought from neighbouring townships. Among the Egba, who are concentrated largely in the town of Abeokuta, the situation is different. In general what seems to happen is that a very distant relationship may be ignored unless the parti is definitely undesirable in which case the relationship is a useful weapon for the opposition to keep in reserve.

When it is thought to be proper and possible for a young man to take a wife, unless he has already formed an attachment, his female relatives - his mother, perhaps, or female collaterals of his father, or his own collaterals - look around for a suitable girl (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.309). After the first tentative advances each of the kin groups concerned will conduct preliminary investigations into the background and antecedents of the other. A family with a bad/

bad reputation for disease, debt¹ or dishonour is not likely to be favoured. At the same time enquiries are made about the personal qualities of the two young people themselves. A young man should be sober, honest, industrious and of pleasing manner; the ideal bride is modest, industrious, respectful and chaste.

Betrothal and Marriage

Each family having established to its own satisfaction the acceptability of the other, the formal procedures now begin. The father of the prospective bridegroom, accompanied perhaps by the head of the compound and other senior members of his lineage, together with wives and daughters of the compound, will call formally upon the girl's father to request permission to marry her (cf. Ajisafe, 1924, p.52). This application for the girl to become the wife of their kinsman is called itoro. If the bride's kin do not wish the matter to proceed farther they will regretfully decline/

¹ Nor is this caution, at least on the part of the man's kin, unconnected with the fact that a husband is not only responsible for his wife's debts, but is also obliged to assist his wife's father in payment of fines, debts and other disbursements (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.311).

decline to sanction the match, giving as an alleged reason the fact that the Ifa oracle has yielded unfavourable prognostications (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.311). If, on the other hand, the marriage is approved, the bride's kin will agree, subject to a favourable response from the Ifa oracle, which is then consulted (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p. 314). If the oracle gives a satisfactory reply (Ifafore) the formal betrothal ijohun or isihun follows. It takes the form of a gift from the groom's kin, usually about 10 gns., to be divided among the bride's father and his relatives and the bride's mother and her relatives. The ceremony of ijohun establishes a contractual relationship and the young man has now certain rights over the person of the girl (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p. 314). He may, for example, claim damages if she is seduced by another. The girl must now avoid her potential affines and her bridegroom. On the other hand, the latter must now show to her kin the respect which he must maintain for the rest of his life: he must now commence to make the periodic gifts of yams or maize to her father and to render him service on his farm, quite apart from the goods and services he must contribute at special events in the/

the bride's father's family (cf. Forde, 1951, p.28).¹
 There are no gifts from the bride's kin to the groom's, but at each point in the proceedings and on each visit they must provide food and drink in generous quantities. This may entail a relatively large expenditure.

On an agreed day, when the time of actual transfer of the girl to the groom's compound approaches, the second part of the formalities, the idanan (the making of affinity) takes place (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.325). A number of his kinsfolk assemble. These do not include the young man, nor his father, but otherwise may comprise lineage members - male and female - and wives. The lead is often taken by his eldest sister or his father's sister. This group goes to the bride's father's compound, taking with them the customary gifts in calabashes on a covered tray. These gifts comprise:

- 44 kola nuts (obi)
- 44 bitter kola nuts (orogbo)
- 22 alligator peppers (atare)
- 2 bottles of Schnapps
- 2 bottles of honey (oyin)
- 1/

¹ Appendix I gives examples of marriage expenses incurred.

- 1 dozen bottles of beer
- 1 Bible with a ring tied to it
with blue ribbon
- 1 purse containing £2:10:0
- 2 decanters also decorated with
blue ribbon
- 2 complete sets of clothing of
costly native-woven cloth
 - head-tie (gele)
 - blouse (buba)
 - wrapper (iro)
 - shoulder cloth or veil (iborun)
 - second wrapper (ipele)
- Money comprising the actual idanan
or marriage fee.¹

Each of these articles has a symbolic significance. Kola nuts drive away evil. Bitter kola represents long life. As the seeds in an alligator pepper are countless, so may the children of the engaged couple be. The drinks, schnapps and beer, signify prosperity: a poor man cannot afford to entertain or to buy drinks for his friends: a person who can afford these things will be prosperous. The honey is given in the hope that the future life of the young couple may be as sweet as honey and that happiness may abound. The/

¹ In Abeokuta Province this has been limited by by-law to £5.10/-

The Bible and the ring are modern Christian innovations which are not present at the marriage ceremonies of pagans or Moslems. The blue ribbon signifies purity. The decanters are meant to adorn the new home and they also are fairly recent innovations. Formerly the honey was put into the decanters, but now it is put into ordinary bottles and the decanters are presented clean. The wrappers are a kind of trousseau. As they are presented a prayer is said that the wrapper may soon be soiled by a new child on the mother's back. In other words, it is a plea for a fertile marriage. It is considered a shameful state of affairs if a woman wears fine clean raiment and has no child to soil it.

On arrival at the compound of the bride's father one finds the bride's kin - paternal, maternal and wives of her compound - assembled, although the girl herself is not apparent. The senior women of the young man's lineage approach and prostrate. They are asked why they have come: much play is made of this. There are many salutations and much apparent misunderstanding. "You have saluted our father and our mother", the visitors are told, "no-one else. Is it only they, no-one else, with whom you have/

have business?" This elicits a fresh set of salutations. Then the bride's kin say they cannot hear, cannot understand what the visitors say, the visitors must speak louder, what they say must be translated. Again, more play, laughter and joviality. After a long time and much self-disparagement by the groom's representatives, the spokeswoman of the bride's kin - usually an elder female member of her lineage - consents to listen to their suit. The spokeswoman of the boy's kin, a classificatory sister or father's sister, makes the request for the final time. "We have come to ask for one of your daughters as our wife." The girl is named and praised. The bride's representative asks who is to be the groom and his name is given. The bride's representative goes on to ask what preparations have been made for this request and she is told that the preparations have been made according to the traditions of former days. At the question, "What have you brought?", the customary gifts are produced by one of the wives of the groom's lineage who offers it to the bride's representative. The gift is refused until a "key" is given to "open it". When this "key", usually about 11/-, is handed over the gift is uncovered. As each item is handed over the groom's/

groom's representative makes a prayer appropriate to its symbolism. She prays that all evil may be driven from the young couple; that they may have long life; that their children may be countless as the seeds of the alligator pepper; and so on. Each item is minutely examined and checked for quality and quantity by the woman representing the bride's kin. Complaints are made about the quality and the amount. In fact, there is usually a long period of altercation and bickering ranging in different cases from jest, through mock severity to a marked degree of hostility. However, in time agreement is reached and the gift accepted. At this point a few of each kind of the kola nuts and 10/- will be refunded to the wives of the bridegroom's lineage who have carried the gift to the compound of the bride's father. This is now the time for festivity. Songs are sung in celebration. The Schnapps is opened and the groom's kin must remain until it is all drunk. Refreshments - drinks and food - are produced. There is drumming, dancing and singing.

Later, the gifts will be divided equally among the bride's paternal and maternal kin (cf. Ward, 1937, p.23), while she herself receives the Bible and the ring, the purse and its contents, the/

the decanters and the clothing.

This is the basic ceremonial of marriage. Almost every Yoruba, whatever his or her sub-tribal origin, background, status or education, celebrates it after this fashion. Even the most sophisticated young man or woman performs these nuptial rites whether he or she is to be married with full religious ceremony in a Christian church or to contract a civil union in front of the District Officer. In many cases young men and women who have met in the United Kingdom while studying and have married according to English law are, on their return to Nigeria, obliged to fulfill the customary obligation of idanan, without which their union would not be recognised by their kinsfolk.

The Christian habit of including among the customary gifts a Bible to which a gold ring is attached with blue ribbon has been mentioned above. At the idanan ceremony, after the gifts have been accepted by the bride's kin, she is led, usually heavily veiled, to the place where the assembly is gathered and there she is asked to choose what she wishes from the gifts. Having received careful prior instruction, she picks out the Bible and the ring. She then goes quietly away again.

Moslem law requires two adult witnesses, preferably/

preferably male, each representing the kin groups concerned, to witness and sign the contract. After the idanan ceremony the young couple, together with their kinsfolk and friends, attend the mosque. There the two witnesses formally assent to the union; the Imam joins the hands of the bride and bridegroom and prays over them; and the ritual is completed by a recitation of the Fatiha or opening chapter of the Koran. This ceremony, the isoyigi, is never performed for more than four wives. The Koran enjoins a Moslem to have but four wives at one time. A man may, however, undergo the ceremony of isoyigi any number of consecutive times as long as he limits the current number of his wives to four by means of divorce or death. Any other women he introduces to his household are termed wahari (from the Hausa). They are regarded as legal wives by native law and custom, although of somewhat inferior status. Their children are accepted as legitimate issue.

About a month after the idanan ceremony a day is fixed for the bride's transfer to her husband's/

husband's compound.¹ Before she leaves she pays farewell visits to members of her kin, who wish her luck and give her gifts (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.542). On the day itself she goes to her father to obtain his blessing. He admonishes her to respect and obey her husband and his kin and he prays that her union may be blessed with happiness and fertility (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.338). The actual transfer is a fairly quiet affair. Either before daybreak or in the evening when there is more chance of avoiding the mischief or medicine of ill-wishers, she is escorted by four young men who should be kinsmen but not brothers. She is also accompanied by two wives from her natal compound who will stay with her in her husband's compound until the consummation of the union and who will bring to her parents the proofs of her virginity (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.339), two other wives to carry her belongings, and a bridesmaid, a young member of her own lineage who will remain with her for three months (cf. Ward, 1938, p.25. Fadipe, 1940, p.270). This girl is known as omo/

¹ Formerly, among the Egba the transfer took place at the beginning of the rainy season, after the harvest. The actual date is usually fixed after consultation of the Ifa oracle (Johnson, 1921, p.114. Talbot I, 1926, p.90).

omo iyawo and for the first nine days or so she is assisted in her duties by a young girl from the bridegroom's kin (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.270). A number of young women of the bride's egbe or association also conduct her to her new home.

At the gateway of the compound the bride will be greeted by the wives of the men of her husband's lineage, who then ritually wash her feet, iwese, to clean off all impurities and to welcome her to a new home and a new way of life (cf. Ward, 1937, p.50). Some 11/- to 22/- is put in the water in which her feet have been washed and this money will later be sent to her parents. The wives of the groom's lineage carry the bride into the compound and it is from this that the induction of the bride into her new home is usually known, the igbe iyawo or lifting of the bride.

The bride and her escorts are taken to the compound head and the escorts confide her to his care and protection (cf. Ward, 1937, p.51). She is next led to the most senior wife of the compound, the first wife of the compound head (cf. Ward, 1937, p.51), who in turn hands her over to the wife to whose care she has been entrusted during her first few months in the compound. Her belongings, comprising clothes, kitchen utensils and/

and the symbols of her own lineage orisa or god are placed in her new room.

She is then washed, dressed and prepared to meet her husband. During her entry and the subsequent preparations the husband has been elsewhere. It is forbidden that he should see her before he comes to her to consummate the marriage (cf. Ward, 1938, p.11). The Yoruba phrase for 'he meets her in the house' has a double entendre and can also signify that she is unchaste. It is felt that were the husband to come into contact with her before meeting her in the nuptial chamber there would be a conflict of meaning and the implication would be that she was not a virgin.

The virginity of the bride is a matter of great moment. On the morning after the consummation of the marriage the bed sheet is carefully scrutinised for the blood stains which prove her erst-while virginity. If it is found that the girl was in fact virgo intacta money is wrapped up in the sheet and sent to her mother (cf. Talbot II, 1926, p.398. Ward, 1937, pp.23-4). The bride is kept within the compound for a varying length of time, usually three to five months, and is given only light tasks to perform. If she is proved unchaste she is treated with contempt; obloquy and/

and labour are showered upon her; she receives no special treatment nor is she secluded. She remains, however, a legal wife. It is probable that she will be beaten until she confesses the name of her seducer who is liable for damages (cf. Johnson, 1921, p.115. Ward, 1938, p.29).

The bride is strictly secluded for eight days after her arrival. The eighth day marks her outing, ijade iyawo. But before that, on about the fifth day, she has two ritual tasks to perform. Covering her head, she takes a broom and sweeps the compound, iyawokoru, with the help of the members of her egbe or association who are still with her. As she sweeps the various parts she is given a gift by those living there (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.343). Together with the senior wife who is her guardian she may also visit the adjacent compounds of other important members of her husband's kin from whom she also collects gifts. Her second task is to fetch water. Up to this time she has been veiled, but her husband's mother or sister now gives her a fee in order that they may purchase the right to see her face. From this time she will go about the compound unveiled.

At her outing she is dressed in great finery and is feasted and toasted. After these celebrations/

celebrations, the remaining members of her egbe will leave her to return to their homes. However, it is likely that the bride may still not take over her full domestic duties and responsibilities nor is she yet permitted to leave the compound. Until the full period of seclusion is over the groom's mother or his senior wife undertakes the cooking and housework of the bride (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p. 347). This is a period of adjustment for her when she is humoured, petted and looked after.

Atypical Forms of Marriage

In the above description I have outlined the traditionally accepted mode of marriage. Three other atypical forms should, however, be mentioned although they are not of common occurrence.

The first type may be regarded as an example of marriage by capture. It appears to be confined to Ibadan and its environs. If a young man feels that his betrothed's father is reluctant or procrastinating in the performance of the marriage ceremonies, the former may decide to take matters into his own hands and abduct the girl. He will take her to one of the adjacent farming villages and by the time the irate father/

father appears intercourse will have taken place. However, this is confined to cases where the marriage has already been arranged but where the young man suspects an unreasonable delay or where the father is trying to coerce the man by indefinite postponements. The man, by his forceful anticipation of marital prerogatives, is seeking to speed up the conclusion of the marriage contract. The frequency of abductions of this type is difficult to estimate. In Ibadan the magistrate is determined to abolish the custom as one which is repugnant to natural justice, and in cases which indignant fathers bring before him he tends to impose the most severe penalty the law provides. He estimated that there may be seven cases of this nature in one month. Many cases will, however, never be disclosed and the couple concerned will in due course be married in the usual manner. In the Ibadan native courts, the penalty for abduction is generally a fine of £5 and £2.10/- damages awarded to the parents or 3 months' imprisonment with hard labour.

The second atypical form is associated with the Moslem population. If a man has a deep regard for another; or if he is deeply indebted to him in some way - not necessarily monetarily; or if/

if he wishes to fulfil his religious obligations as a Moslem in the sight of Allah - and perhaps in the sight of man - he may give his daughter to his friend without demanding any of the customary gifts or marriage fee. This type of union is known as sara, from the Hausa word for alms. It appears to have exactly the same social validity as an ordinary native law and custom union. The test case would be of course on the occasion of a divorce between a man and a woman married in this way. Unfortunately I was unable to obtain any example of this. Children of such a union are regarded as legitimate as those of a union accompanied by the usual transfer of gifts and money.

The third type is very uncommon and although informants told me of it I came across no instance of it. A woman may attend a native doctor for assistance in illness or some other sort of problem. If she finds that she is unable to pay him for his services she may give herself to him as payment for the debt. The phrase applied to this type of union is gba mi ki ora mi (save me and keep in return).

Extent of Polygyny

Yoruba marriage is potentially polygynous/

polygynous. In the traditional farming set-up a polygynous household is an economic asset. Each additional wife or child means an additional pair of hands to assist in the development of domestic resources. At the same time, in a relatively un-diversified community, the number of wives with which a man is blessed is one of the few available indices of his wealth. The wealthy man flaunts the number of his womenfolk and they become symbols of success and prestige (cf. Ward, 1937, pp. 28-29. 1938, p.16).

It is still incumbent upon a member of the traditional élite, the rulers or obas, to be the proud husband of a large number of wives. It is reputed that the late Deji of Akure had about 140 wives. So well established is this tradition that two of the premier obas, both of whom have received the accolade, have large polygynous households. In present day circumstances an oba who is literate and Christian may find himself in a quandary. His status, his elders and his people expect him to increase his conjugal establishment. His education and religion are factors militating against it. The resolution of the conflict depends on a number of factors, personal as well as social, but one of the most important/

important seems to be the extent of his education combined with the degree of his participation in the new élite groups. If he is a professional man or if he is an important member of the new political power groups, there seems to be less chance of his acceding to the pressure of tradition in this respect.

No. of Wives					No information	Total No. of Cases
1	2	3	4	more		
33	41	12	8	3	3	100

Table 4

The above Table gives figures showing the marital condition of the fathers of 100 children attending a primary school in Abeokuta. It does not, however, give any indication of the total number of wives each man may have had nor the number of divorces or separations he may have experienced. It is a statement of existing marital arrangements at a given time. To give some idea of the socio-economic status of the sample Table 5 shows the fathers' occupations.

Farmer/

Farmer	76
Trader	4
Tailor	1
Policeman	1
Clerk	1
Lorry-driver ...	2
Carpenter	1
Labourer - P.W.D.	1
No information ..	<u>13</u>
	100

Table 5

It is impossible to determine what proportion of native law and custom unions are in fact polygynous. If any reliance is to be placed on the census data (Nigerian Census, Table 2) quoted in Section 2 above, it would seem that, in view of the relative numerical equality of the sexes and assuming that most men marry sometime in life, the proportion of polygynous unions cannot be very high. (Cf. Ward, 1937, pp. 27, 41.)

Marital Fidelity

Extramarital infidelity is regarded with extreme disfavour. Complete fidelity is expected of/

of a wife. If she has sexual relations with another man the latter renders himself liable to pay the husband compensation for infringement of the latter's exclusive rights, while the woman will be severely chastised. On the other hand, a man is a creature of powerful and excusable urges, the gratification of which both affords him satisfaction and testifies to his virility.

Mystical procedures are available to ensure fidelity. One class of medicine which a man may administer to his wife is believed to cause the death of the woman's lover. Another class is believed to prevent the lover from withdrawing after coitus, so that the adulterous pair will be discovered in flagrante delicto.

Stability of Marriage

In the traditional farming community several factors militate against marital instability. In the first place, as will later be explained, there is great structural bias against the return of a married daughter to the parental home. Unless a woman has another man to go to it is rare for her to leave her husband. Secondly, there is the lack of openings other than marriage for a woman and her consequent dependance on a man/

man for economic and social support. Another factor is the fact that a child belongs to the father no matter what the grounds for his wife's wish for separation. The wife may not take the child with her unless it is a young unweaned infant in which case she may keep it and care for it until it is about five years old. A woman, if she leaves her husband, must leave her children to the untender mercies of her co-wives, perhaps already jealous of the rights of their own offspring. Johnson (1921, p.116) and Ajisafe (1924, p.58) report that previously divorce was practically unknown - a statement of extreme dubiety but suggestive of the difficulties with which a dissatisfied wife may be faced in the traditional situation (cf. also Ward, 1937, p.12). At all events, whatever may have formerly been the position, cases of divorce take up a large part of the time of the native courts. A fuller discussion of this will follow in Section 10.

Old Age

Old age brings with it high prestige. The old are the nearest to the ancestors by virtue of their seniority. They are the main repositories of tradition and the principal guardians/

guardians of precedent. Nevertheless, Fadipe (1940, p.166) agrees with me in believing that although the aged are highly honoured their real authority is restricted to ritual and formal occasions. They are cherished and revered in their old age but they are tacitly ignored in the organisation of every-day life.

Death

In general, in spite of natural sorrow, the death of an old man or woman is accepted with equanimity. It is an event to be expected and is a further stage in his or her progression from one status to another within the lineage. But the death of a young person is an unnatural occurrence which is often ascribed to witchcraft. In this case there is little public mourning or ritual.

The proper observance of burial ceremonies is among the most important duties of the surviving. Food is prepared for the waking and in the evening relatives, friends and acquaintances will/

will gather.¹ There will be eating, singing and dancing throughout the night. About 2 a.m. the corpse is washed, wrapped in cloths and fastened with seven ties if a woman, nine if a man (cf. Ajisafe, 1924, p.80).² The preparation of the corpse for burial is undertaken by women of the compound, assisted by the sons-in-law of the deceased (cf. Talbot II, 1926, p.469). The latter are also required to dig the grave and assist in the actual interment (cf. Ajisafe, 1924, p.81). This usually takes place on the second day after death. If the dead man was rich or influential, or if he was a member of one of the important cult-groups such as Ogboni or Oro which perform special rites on the death of their members, burial will be deferred. The longer the period between death and burial, the greater the expense incurred, for, throughout this time, and indeed for several days after the burial, funeral/

¹ It is improper to stay away on such occasions. To do so would lay one open to charges of at least ill-feeling, if not of witchcraft. Condolences should be offered and - if possible - contributions made to the funeral expenses. It is especially the duty of kinsfolk to assist in meeting such expenses. Sons-in-law, for example, are expected to contribute a goat and kola-nuts.

² Cf. the day on which a child's naming ceremony takes place.

funeral baked meats and entertainment are provided for all.

The traditional grave is under the floor of the deceased's room (cf. Johnson, 1921, p.137). A woman is buried in her husband's compound, but if she is barren she may be buried in her natal compound.

If it is a man who has died neither his widows nor his daughters will assist in the preparations or take part in the festivities (cf. Talbot II, 1926, p.465). They must remain in seclusion, not washing their bodies or their clothes or combing their hair. On the third day after death, ita oku, there is a special celebration which is repeated on the seventh day, ije oku. On this day the widows are led out into the compound by an egungun, a masked spirit, to a place where there are a number of mounds of earth, each with a yam on top. Each of these represents one of the widows. Another mound, without a yam, represents the dead husband. Each woman takes a yam and this signifies the last food-stuff which she will receive from the dead man (cf. Johnson, 1921, p.138). About seven days later the egungun will again appear demanding gifts. The mourning continues over a period varying/

varying from 40 days to five months according to financial circumstances. During this time the widows remain in seclusion. When the time is over the women wash themselves ritually and come out (ijade) to participate once more in ordinary life (cf. Ajisafe, 1924, p.84 Ward, 1937, p.18).¹ If a woman has died similar rites are carried out, but the restrictions on the husband are much less stringent and are in force for a much shorter period (cf. Ajisafe, 1924, p.85).

Some time after the burial there is a second ceremony. Entertainment - food, drink, music - is provided on a large scale in commemoration of the dead person. The time when this is held depends on the financial conditions of the survivors. In some cases such memorial ceremonies are repeated annually. They are much publicised occasions and a significant majority of them are given by sons for deceased mothers.

Status of Widows

As has already been noted, marriage is essentially an alliance between two kin groups. Although/

¹ Announcements are now often made in the local press of Widow's Confinement Outing Ceremonies.

Although the woman is the legal spouse of a particular man, jural rights over her revert to his lineage on his death. She then becomes the wife of one of her late husband's junior collaterals, or in the event of there being no suitable man of that generation, she may fall to the lot of one of the deceased man's sons, provided that the young man is not her own son (cf. Ward, 1937, pp. 18, 30). The new husband has an obligation to look after the woman's children by her first husband.

A woman has a right to refuse the proposed husband. However, the factors which, it has been suggested, militate against instability of marriage also operate to prevent a widow from rejecting the new husband. If she accepts, the rites of marriage are not repeated but the union is nonetheless a legal one. If she refuses to become the wife of any member of her dead husband's lineage she must refund the bride-wealth handed over at her marriage (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.355). It often happens that an aged woman does not become the wife of any man in her husband's compound, but she stays there to be cared for solicitously by her adult sons.

Inheritance/

Inheritance

Forty days after the burial the kinsfolk of the dead person gather to divide the inheritance. Those who have not assisted with the preparations and expenses of the funeral are held to forfeit their rights of inheritance (cf. Ajisafe, 1924, p.83. Fadipe, 1940, p.507. Forde, 1951, p.25). Contributions to funeral expenses are levied according to sibling groups and not by individuals, although the eldest son and daughter may each make special contributions. Property is divided into two types, moveable and immoveable. Moveable property, that is personal effects, clothes, money, furniture, live-stock and so on, may be distributed by bequest (cf. Johnson, 1921, p.327. Ajisafe, 1924, p.15). Immoveable property, that is land and houses, may never be alienated from the lineage group (cf. Ellis, 1894, p.177). The traditional practice is inheritance by collaterals, usually siblings (cf. Johnson, 1921, p.326. Ajisafe, 1924, p.8. Fadipe, 1940, p.237. Forde, 1951, p.25). No-one may, however, inherit from a junior person (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.450). Goods and property are distributed according to seniority, the most senior taking the largest share (cf. Ajisafe, 1924, p.15). If children inherit they do so/

so as sibling-groups (cf. Fadipe, 1940, pp.237, 598). The new tendency is for children to inherit their father's property (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.511). In general males inherit most of their father's estate, females their mother's (cf. Ellis, 1894, p.177). This was especially so when much of the moveable property comprised artefacts and articles peculiar to the traditional sexual division of labour and interests. Now, however, modern forms of property include money or shares, and inheritance by persons of the same sex is no longer always observed. A woman's rights and title to inheritance of usufruct of her father's immoveable property must be recognised and respected (cf. Ajisafe, 1924, p.8). A woman's personal (i.e. moveable) property is under her exclusive control and she may leave it to whom she pleases. In general, a woman's property is inherited by her children (cf. Ajisafe, 1924, p.8) but should she die childless all her property may go to her own kin (cf. Ajisafe, 1924, p.89). A man rarely inherits from his wife (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.203).

Succession

A title is held by the incumbent until death (cf. Ajisafe, 1924, p.87). On the death of/

of a bale or lineage head the oldest surviving issue of the founder of the lineage succeeds (cf. Johnson, 1921, p.326), subject to general lineage approval of his eligibility. However, the eldest member will not succeed if he is a sibling of the deceased (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.238). The successor removes to the chief apartment of the compound; takes his place as town councillor and assumes any titles associated with the lineage.

Summary

In short, a Yoruba town spatially comprises a number of compounds. Residence of these compounds is determined by two principles, birth and marriage. Every Yoruba becomes by birth a member of his father's compound (and, it may be added, of his father's lineage). But since rules of exogamy intervene to prevent incest it is necessary for the individual to seek a spouse outside the compound (and the lineage). Marriage is patrilocal and therefore the woman is the mobile element in the union. This means that she must leave her natal compound for that of her husband.

Traditionally the life of a man, his wife or wives, and their children is organised in/

in terms of the best interests of his lineage. In the following sections it will be shown how the lineage is the prime unit in the religious, educational, political and economic systems as well as in the traditional system of kinship and marriage. Modern conditions have, however, produced a different situation in which there has been a gradual impairment of lineage functioning in each of these spheres. This trend is probably best illustrated by the changes occurring in the system of kinship and marriage and I shall therefore deal in much greater detail with this aspect than with the religious, educational, political and economic aspects to which I shall refer in Part II.

PARTION I. RELIGION, ETHICS AND MARRIAGE

The Traditional Religion

Christian Evangelisation

The Effects of Christianity

PART II THE LINEAGE vs. SPECIALISED AGENCIES

Islam

Green versus Greenery

Popular Attitude to Marriage

Summary

SECTION 5. RELIGION, KINSHIP AND MARRIAGE

The Traditional Religion

Christian Evangelisation

The Effects of Christianity

Christianity and Polygamy

Islam

Cross versus Crescent

Moslem Attitude to Marriage

Summary

The main theme of this thesis is the loss suffered by the lineage of functions traditionally ascribed to it, as a concomitant of the specialisation of function which is a characteristic of urbanism. In Part II I shall examine certain aspects of the total social structure of Yoruba society in order to illustrate this process. The particular aspects which will be discussed are religion, education, political and economic organisation.

In the present section I shall begin with a brief description of the traditional religious system, showing the lineage group as the congregational unit. This will be followed by an account of the advent of Christianity and Islam and the effect of those on marriage and on the religious function of the lineage.

The Traditional Religion

Yoruba religion is a complex of gods, ancestors and spirits. Olorun is the Supreme Being (cf. Johnson, 1921, p.26), but he takes little interest in the earth and its inhabitants (cf. Talbot II, 1926, p.29). These are the concern of a pantheon of lesser deities, gods of natural features and phenomena, tutelary spirits and/

and deified heroes and ancestors (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.794).

The Yoruba believe in a life after death (cf. Johnson, 1921, p.26). Advancing age brings seniority and prestige. Death does not mark the end of this process: it is the rite de passage marking the transition into a yet more authoritative position, and those who pass through the valley must be respected and venerated (cf. Ward, 1938, p.118). The dead are still members of society who by their death have become initiated into a new status and who possess a continued social effectiveness (cf. Talbot II, 1926, p.298). They are to be worshipped, appeased, invoked and consulted. Just as death does not bring an end to social participation, neither does it end lineage membership. The ancestors remain interested observers - often indeed participant observers - of lineage affairs. They are never far off and may indeed return to the lineage at a subsequent birth (cf. Johnson, 1921, p.26. Talbot II, 1926, p.300). Many personal names reflect this belief in re-incarnation; for example, Iyabo, Returned Mother, and Babatunde, Returned Father. The ancestors, then, are far from sleeping partners: they take an active interest in all matters of importance/

importance to the lineage, the health of its members, the birth of children, marriages, the fertility of the land and other matters relating to its tenure and inheritance, and so on.

Intercourse with the ancestors is carried on at three levels. At the personal level it may take the form of throwing small offerings or pouring libations on to the ground before eating and drinking, at the same time calling on the ancestors for their blessing (cf. Talbot II, 1926, p.303). Or it may be a sacrifice to a deceased parent or grandparent on the site of the grave by an individual when he is in need of assistance or advice. At the level of lineage organisation, nearly every lineage possesses a shrine which is usually the spot on the earthen floor at the head of the grave of the earliest ancestor buried in the compound (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.806). Here the bale, or lineage head, officiates (cf. Talbot II, 1926, p.28) and offers sacrifices of eggs, yam, fowls, goats or sheep in times of sickness or distress, on the advice of the Ifa priest (cf. Talbot II, 1926, p.25) or at the principal annual ceremony (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.806). This collective lineage worship shows an insistence on the relationship with/

with the patrilineal ancestors and is a demonstration of the solidarity and continuity of the lineage group and its existence as a perpetual corporation. In other words, the ancestors become the focus of unity and the symbol of corporate lineage identity, and this unity and identity become explicit in the ancestral cult and are manifested in the ancestral shrine set up in the compound. At the level of the town organisation, some of the most important Yoruba cults are associated with the worship of the ancestors; for example, Gelede, Egungun and Oro (cf. Johnson, 1921, p.330. Ajisafe, 1924, p.91. Talbot II, 1926, pp.304-306. Fadipe, 1940, pp.754, 806.). Membership of these cults are normally restricted to men, thus emphasising the pre-eminence of the patrilineal principle within this society. However, the possibility of joining such a cult is normally inherited through either parent, but the actual application is decided finally by recourse to Ifa divination. Admission is accompanied by secret rites and ceremonies and within the cult there are officers and title-holders (cf. Morton-Williams, 1956a). Titles are usually vested in particular lineage groups, although the members of each cult are drawn from many lineages and it is/

is rare to find the members of any lineage belonging exclusively to a single religious association (cf. Morton-Williams, 1956c, p.27). Morton-Williams (1956a) suggests the direct political function of the Egungun society as an area of social control over-riding the kinship group. The same point is demonstrated by the association of the Oro society with the Ogboni society, as the executioners of offenders condemned by the latter (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.758). These cult groups, then, may be regarded as some of a number of groups through which political authority is exercised. At this point in the Yoruba structure the lineage becomes subordinate to other non-lineal forms of association, membership of which is, however, often determined by principles of descent and succession.

In terms of the individual this means that he may become a worshipper of a particular god or spirit by descent or divination, or by a combination of these (cf. Talbot II, 1926, p.92. Forde, 1951, p.29). He will, of course, become a worshipper at the ancestral shrine, and, if his lineage is devoted to the worship of a particular god or to membership of a particular cult, he will also join the particular worship of his ancestors (cf./

(cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.758).¹ Occasionally, however, he acquires an additional divinity of his own.² At birth or in a time of distress, the Ifa oracle may prescribe the worship of another (cf. Talbot II, 1926, pp. 39, 92. Fadipe, 1940, p. 806). In addition, nearly every Yoruba man worships Ifa, the divinity associated with divination: nearly every woman Ori, a divinity to ensure good luck (Fadipe, 1940, p.805).

In relation to the kinship structure, the religious group or congregation co-incides with the basic kinship group, the lineage, as far as ancestral worship is concerned. Membership of many of the other cult groups is to a large extent determined by membership of a particular lineage, and titles and offices within cults tend to be tied to certain lineages. Thus, in fact, the basic kinship unit and the basic religious unit tend to be co-terminous: the lineage is the functioning religious unit.

Christian/

¹ Verger, for example, speaks of "... l'Orisha (god) étant héréditaire dans la lignée paternelle ..." (Verger, 1954, p.336).

² Ward (1938, pp. 81-2) states that on marriage a woman is supposed to renounce her lineage gods and take on those of her husband. However, informants in Abeokuta stated that while a woman may adopt her husband's gods, she usually remains faithful to her own.

Christian Evangelisation

There were three principal media of infiltration of Western influence into Yoruba-land - the mission, the administration, and the new economy. Of these, the first in time was undoubtedly the mission. Beginning at the coast Christian evangelists soon moved inland along the main rivers and land routes, establishing their influence at a time when neither traders nor administrators had yet appeared. They were not, however, the first Europeans to have visited Yoruba-land. That distinction must go to Captains Clapperton and Pearce with Dr. Morrison and Richard Lander, who passed through as early as 1825-6 (cf. Forde, 1951, p.4).

Interest of an evangelical kind started in the middle of the 19th century and was encouraged by the humanitarian anti-slavery movement. The first Christian missionaries to work among the Yoruba were the Wesleyans. In 1841 the Reverend T.B. Freeman, a coloured Wesleyan missionary, landed at Badagry and founded several mission stations there and at Abeokuta¹ (cf. Talbot I, 1926/

¹ The return from slavery of a number of repatriated Egbas played an important part in the coming of the missions. In 1838 the first of these slaves arrived at Abeokuta and later sent calls to the missionaries to follow (Fadipe, 1940, p.118).

1926, p.49 - where, however, the date given is 1842. Burns, 1948, p.241. Nigeria Handbook, 1953, p.108 - where the date cited is again 1842). In 1842 he was followed at Badagry by representatives of the Church Missionary Society under the leadership of the Reverend Henry Townsend (cf. Talbot I, 1926, pp. 89, 130 - date given 1845). Although the latter visited Abeokuta in 1843 (Fadipe, 1940, p.118), being as far as is known, the first white man to do so, local feeling was against allowing the Christians to establish a mission there, as it was feared that it would disturb the profitable slave trade (cf. Johnson, 1921, pp.39, 296. Talbot I, 1926, p.131. Burns, 1948, p.241). It was not until three years later, in 1846, that land at Ake, in Abeokuta, was granted to the C.M.S. and a mission built. Under the guidance of Townsend and Crowther,¹ the Abeokuta mission flourished (cf. Talbot I, 1926, p.135). Schools were started; in 1854 a printing press was set up; and in 1859 a bilingual newspaper, Iwe Irohin/

¹ The Reverend S.A. Crowther (c.1809-1901) was a Yoruba who was, in his youth, sold into slavery. The slave-ship in which he was being transported to America was captured by a British cruiser and he was liberated and taken to Sierra Leone where he was educated (Burns, 1948, p.91n).

Irohin, was published by Townsend (Johnson, 1921, p.39. Talbot I, 1926, pp. 61, 142). By 1860 it was reckoned that there were some 1500 Christians in Abeokuta (Talbot I, 1926, p.144). Meanwhile the Wesleyan mission, although the first in the field, did not establish a proper mission in Abeokuta (although an African catechist was installed there) until the arrival of the Reverend T. Champness and his wife in 1861 (Biobaku, 1957, p.33). The missions were not without their setbacks. From the beginning there was hostility on the part of the local slave-dealers and about 1849 and again in 1867 there was active persecution (Johnson, 1921, p.39. Talbot I, 1926, p.132). In 1867 all the missionaries, together with the traders, were expelled from Abeokuta and were not re-admitted until 1875 (Ellis, 1894, p.21. Talbot I, 1926, p.147. Burns, 1948, p.127).

Elsewhere the C.M.S. was expanding its activities. In 1843 the Reverend D. Hinderer became the first missionary to work in Lagos (Talbot I, 1926, p.89). In May 1851 he moved to Ibadan (Johnson, 1921, p.39. Talbot I, 1926, p.298). From that time Abeokuta and Ibadan became the centres from which a vast amount of proselytising was carried out. Meanwhile in 1852/

1852 the C.M.S. shifted its headquarters from Badagry to Lagos (Johnson, 1921, p.39). In 1863 Crowther was appointed Bishop of West Africa and made Lagos his episcopal seat (Talbot I, 1926, p.63).

The Wesleyans and the Church Missionary Society did not monopolise this fruitful field. In 1861 the first Roman Catholic Mission was established in Yorubaland (Talbot I, 1926, p.62) and in 1868 a mission station was set up on Lagos Island, followed in 1880 by one at Abeokuta (Nigeria Handbook, 1953, p.109). The American Baptists were even earlier. In 1849 the Reverend J.T. Bowen of the Southern Baptist Convention visited Badagry (Talbot I, 1926, p.91). The next year he established his headquarters at Ijaye (Talbot I, 1926, p.51). By 1953 Baptist influence had extended to Egba and other Yoruba areas (Nigeria Handbook, 1953, p.109).

Expansion of the churches has proceeded actively. In the Western Region, out of a total African population of 6,085 thousands, 2,201 thousands or 36.2% are Christians. In Lagos the percentage is 54.5%, that is 146 thousands out of a total of 267 thousands (Population Census of Nigeria/

Nigeria, 1952-53, Table 8).¹

The present rate of conversion is a matter of conjecture. The optimism of many religious bodies must be regarded with reserve. Nor must it be forgotten that Christianity is competing with a strong rival, Islam. Nevertheless, in the parts of the Western Region which I visited, the church services are well attended. The Lagos Census (Population Census of Lagos, 1950, p.22) states that the number of professed Christians in Lagos has more than doubled while the Moslems have increased by just over 50% of the 1931 figures. It also suggests that in Lagos Christianity is stronger than Islam, especially among the young people under 25 years of age, but that the proportion decreases with age until more than half of those over 45 are Moslems (op. cit. pp. 22, 23). The Census goes on "This indicates that Christianity has been gaining ground in Lagos due, in part, to the conversion of numbers of the younger residents and also to the immigration of the Christian communities of the/

¹ Cf. this with 1,913 thousands (31.4%) in the Western Region and 9 thousand (3.4%) in Lagos who profess neither Christianity nor Islam.

the Eastern Provinces" (op. cit., p.22).

A generation or so ago, I was told, Christianity was accepted fervently and wholeheartedly by the convert. A man became a monogamist, a church-goer and a staunch church member. In recent years there would appear to have been a change of heart among the descendants of the Church fathers and membership of a Christian sect is often nominal and is important as a trait associated with high social status rather than an indication of deep religious convictions.

A few Yoruba, especially among these who have been educated abroad, regard the Christian churches with suspicion as agents of foreign imperialism. However, the policy of most of the Christian denominations has been to transfer the running of the churches to the Nigerians themselves and to leave actual proselytisation to the foreign missionaries.

The Effects of Christianity

Many were converted to Christianity and many families have a Christian tradition going back two or three generations. On the whole, however, the popular tendency among Christians is/

is to exaggerate the proportion of Christians in the Yoruba population. This may well be because up to recently so many of the vociferous educated minority have been at least nominal Christians.

While the principal aim of the missions has been conversion, their activities have been threefold, spiritual, medical and educational. Until a relatively few years ago almost all medicine and education were in the hands of missionary bodies.¹ This work, although partly inspired by humanitarian motives, was regarded as instrumental in the enlightenment of the heathen. Like the Jesuits, the missionaries realised the importance of childhood training as a means of conditioning a man's beliefs and thoughts. Indeed it may perhaps be said that part of the importance of Christianity lies in the circumstances by which, until recently, education has been almost synonymous with Christianity which has been the direct means of introducing it.

One should be cautious in assessing the part played by the values of Christianity in the process/

¹ The first government school was not founded until 1899 and for long it remained the sole precursor of secular instruction (Burns, 1948, p.242).

process of social change. The situation in Yoruba society today is fluid. Adoption of western values has been highly selective and traditional values appear to be extremely persistent. Nor does the co-existence of two disparate social systems seem to offer insuperable difficulties to personal adjustments. It would be incorrect and misleading to suggest that two value systems exist which may be regarded as mutually exclusive alternatives. Yoruba society is a complex one which has a remarkably sophisticated facility in holding a number of incompatible values simultaneously and little difficulty in evoking the set which is relevant to the situation. It is often said that the new religion attacks the foundations of African systems of belief and authority and that the consequent attrition of traditional social values impairs the whole system of social control. To a certain extent this is undoubtedly true of the Yoruba situation. Unfortunately it is impossible to apply the simple formula direct. Christianity has been one of a cluster of factors, - educational, political and economic - which have been involved in the process of change. It has not been a causative factor, but, especially as a purveyor of education, it has been an important medium of socio-/

socio-cultural penetration.

Nevertheless, the advent of Christianity has had certain fairly direct consequences. Christian teaching aims at the eradication of so-called pagan, unnatural and uncivilised beliefs and practices. Conversion implies an acceptance of Christian values - or, at least, of Christian practices - and a rejection of those activities which appear abhorrent and unacceptable to the missionary. We might include in this category participation in traditional magical and religious rites, polygyny, widow-inheritance, and so on. But such customs may have important functions in the maintenance of lineage cohesion which is impaired by a refusal to assist in communal lineage worship or by an obdurate insistence on monogamy. At the same time the secularisation of the ancestors and the stripping away from the lineage head of his role as mediator with the supernatural result in a loss of respect for both elders and ancestors and a denigration of the validity of their sanctions. Christianity, therefore, may be seen as a factor in the twofold attack on the lineage. There is an impairment in lineage solidarity and a circumscription of its religious functions which are now performed by outside agencies, namely the Christian churches.

Christianity/

Christianity and Polygamy

The view of the different Christian denominations on the question of the nature of marriage differs, and the churches may perhaps be put into two groups. The former regard the state of matrimony as of an ethical and sacramental nature: the latter from a contractual and legalistic view-point. Within the former group come the Roman Catholics and certain of the Anglicans. Roman Catholics hold that marriage is a religious, not a civil institution, and that a civil formality is not enough. A union contracted under native law and custom¹ is regarded as a 'natural' marriage and is raised by baptism to the status of a sacramental union, provided that the condition of monogamy is fulfilled. Among Anglicans a secular statutory marriage is not ipso facto a Christian marriage, but in certain dioceses it is demanded as a necessary condition. The opinion of Anglicans is not uniform on the question of sufficiency of customary marriage. In the diocese of Lagos, for example, customary unions are allowed if they satisfy the criterion of monogamy. However, in the/

¹ Here called a "customary" union.

the diocese of the Niger statutory marriage¹ is the requisite. Opposition to the recognition of customary unions as Christian unions may be summarised briefly in that

- (a) the parties are defective in intention - in other words willingness to contract a statutory union with its irksome restrictions on polygamy implies a firm intention to embrace Christianity without reservation.
- (b) if there are no legal sanctions there is a danger of a lapse into polygamy.
- (c) acceptance of native law and custom as governing the inauguration of a marriage implies its governing of the dissolution.

The non-episcopalian churches view marriage primarily as a civil contract the validity of which is dependent on compliance with the secular law. Customary marriage is therefore sufficient if it is contracted in accordance with the terms of native law and custom and also if it is monogamous (cf. Phillips, 1953, pp. xxiii-xxxii).

It/

¹ i.e., a marriage contracted in terms of the Marriage Ordinance.

It may be seen that the Christian churches, whatever their other dissensions, unite in their condemnation of polygamy. Plurality of spouses and a state of grace are mutually exclusive. Monogamy is, in fact, one of the main conditions of membership of any of the Christian churches (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.246). The Roman Catholics hold that polygamy is completely incompatible with Christianity and no practising polygamist may ever become a member of the Roman Catholic Church unless he puts away all but one - preferably his first - wife. The conversion of a man to Catholicism may thus be the occasion of great unhappiness and hardship to wives who are summarily ejected from the husband's home for - as far as they can see - no good reason. A common way in which the convert compromises with the obstinacy of the priest is by installing his allegedly discarded wife or wives elsewhere, where he may visit them when he so desires. In this way he may fulfil the injunctions of the church without doing too much violence to his own traditions and inclinations. However, the implications of this are that these wives become 'outside wives', that is, their union to the husband is degraded to an equivocal status.

The/

The attitude of the Anglican church is less well-defined. Anglicans try to compromise by distinguishing degree of membership which is related to marital status. A full communicating member of the church must be a monogamist, in some churches married in terms of the Marriage Ordinance. But polygamists are not totally rejected: they may have restricted membership although proscribed from participating in Communion. Full enforcement of the prohibition on polygamy is usual only in the case of a church officer or a teacher employed by a church or mission.

Paradoxically, the non-episcopalian missions take up a position nearer to that of the Catholic Church. Membership automatically debars a man from polygamous unions and, as a corollary, a reversion to polygamy involves excommunication. In practice many members are not monogamists, but a blind eye is turned on their lamentable lapse from grace as long as they hold no church office or appointment.

If polygyny is one of the greatest problems which confront the Christian proselytiser, monogamy is one of the gravest difficulties which Christianity presents to the Yoruba. There is a great gulf between official Christian doctrines and/

and standards in this respect and the general opinion of Yoruba adherents. Many, in fact, have found this condition impossible and unreasonable to fulfil and, denying with John Milton that it is a necessary part of Christian doctrine, form congregations of Christian churches which have seceded from the mission churches (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.284).

Islam

There seems to have been little active Moslem proselytisation before the 20th century. Although the Fulani and Hausa were Moslems their incursions were more in the nature of raids than of jihads and, although according to Johnson they wished to "dip the Koran in the sea" (Johnson, 1921, p.288), that is, to extend their authority throughout Yorubaland, the southward boundary of the Moslem invaders seems to have coincided with the limits of the savanna. It has been suggested that the ravages of the tsetse fly to which cattle are easy victims have been one of the main deterrents to the advance of the cattle-keeping disciples of Mohammed (Fitzgerald, 1955, p.111). Not only that. Islam was associated in the minds of the Yoruba with the hated northerners. Tradition relates/

relates that some time before the sacking of Old Oyo the Yoruba celebrated their own St. Bartholomew's Eve by putting to death all Moslems unfortunate enough to be in their hands. Johnson (1921, p.259) relates a tale of the indignities which Oluewu, Alafin of Oyo, had to undergo at the hands of Shitta, Emir of Ilorin, when the former was obliged to travel to Ilorin to pay homage as a vassal. Nevertheless at the end of the 18th century, Islam had entered Yorubaland (Johnson, 1921, pp. 26, 38). With the assumption of political control by the British, the cessation of civil war and the opening of communications led the way to the peaceful infiltration of Islam which was soon spread south by travelling traders and itinerant mendicant preachers (Johnson, 1921, pp. 38, 39). In recent years there has been a more vigorous era of missionary activity with the advent in Lagos of emissaries of the Ahmadiyya Movement from Pakistan.

According to the 1952-53 Population Census of Nigeria (Table 8) the number of Moslems in the Western Region is 1,971 thousands or 32.4%, and in Lagos 112 thousands or 42.1% of the whole. As in the case of Christianity, it is difficult to assess the rate of conversion in the/

the Western Region, although the Moslem population of Lagos has increased by more than half again since 1931 (Lagos Census, 1950, p.22). No doubt part of the appeal of Islam and Christianity lies in the social prestige and advantages offered by these world-wide faiths.

Cross vs. Crescent

Although the Lagos Census (1950, pp.22, 23) suggests that Christianity is gaining ground at the expense of Islam, yet I believe that in this respect Lagos township is a-typical of Yorubaland as a whole.

In the first place, Moslems are now taking more interest in Western education and training as distinct from Western religion. Moslem professional men are appearing on the scene and demonstrating that the practice of Islam is not incompatible with a Western-type education. This appreciation of a professional and technical instruction arises from a belated realisation that it can be a cogent factor in the acquisition of wealth and prestige. To the unconverted, it means that, as far as worldly considerations go, Christianity has no advantages over Islam.

Secondly, while both religions have a coherent/

coherent and widely accepted body of dogma, Islam presents a more united front. The dissensions among the Christian denominations and their often vocal mutual antipathy tend to weaken the impact of Christianity and cast some shadow of doubt on the validity of the Christian message (cf. Burns, 1948, p.237).

Another point of difference lies in the presentation of the two religions to the West African. The tenets of Islam are preached and practised by fellow Africans: Christianity is brought by European missionaries (cf. Burns, 1948, p.237). The Moslem religion is not regarded with the same suspicion as is Christianity.¹ It is not associated with foreign domination, nor is there any suggestion that it is being imposed - or at least encouraged - by expatriate political overlords as a means of keeping the people passive and submissive in their subordinate position.

Fourthly, each Moslem proselytises as a matter of course and he need not be a religious specialist/

¹ However, much of the pastoral work of the Anglican, Methodist and Baptist bodies is now chiefly entrusted to Nigerians. There are in addition a number of secessionist or 'native' Christian churches which are completely free from control by ex-patriate religious institutions.

specialist. On the whole the Christian is much more apathetic and leaves the burden of conversion to professional priests or missionaries (cf. Burns, 1948, p.237).

Finally, in many respects Islam must appear more congenial to the African and better adapted to his customs. The African is offered a choice between Cross and Crescent. Both involve new doctrines and beliefs. But the first demands a radical change in his way of life: the second seems in accord with the values which he understands (cf. Burns, 1948, p.238). The attitude of the two faiths to the question of marriage illustrates this difference. Christianity forbids polygamy. But Yoruba are by tradition polygamous. The number of wives a man has is an index of his wealth and prosperity: the children they give him are welcome additions to his household. What more natural than that, other things being equal, a man will choose that religion which interferes least with his natural satisfactions and social pre-occupations.

Moslem Attitude to Marriage

Although at a superficial glance it would seem that Islam, like Christianity, should result in/

in a plurality and heterogeneity of beliefs and attitudes, there are two important points to note. In the first place the Yoruba have a high capacity for selective borrowing and adaptation. In the second, the truths of Islam seem less foreign to indigenous values and their adoption therefore causes less disruption. Islamic law has no juridical validity except in so far as it is applied only as a branch of native law and custom. There are no specifically Moslem courts, nor any formal application of Islamic law. Speaking of the Yoruba, Anderson states, "In general, moreover, there seems little desire or demand for either, for the majority of local Muslims appear content to follow the religion of Islam more or less closely in matters of doctrine and ritual but to adhere to their tribal customs in such matters as marriage, divorce, adultery, guardianship and succession - deferring to the law of Islam, if at all, only to the extent that a mallam is usually invited to recite prayers and formalise a contract of marriage otherwise arranged in customary manner or, very occasionally perhaps, to give his advice in matters of divorce" (Anderson, 1954, p.222). Thus Islamic law does not interfere to any great extent with indigenous practice even in matters of 'family' law/

law such as marriage, succession and divorce.

There is no distinction between religious and secular law and Islamic law is contained in the Koran. The Moslem attitude to the position of women is summed up in Sura 4:31 which states:

"Men have authority over women because God has made the one superior to the other
....."

and in Sura 2:228:

"men have a status above women".

In practice a more liberal attitude is usually shown. The word for marriage is the same as that used for copulation and its primary object is to get issue (Guillaume, 1954, p.71). A man may enjoy four wives at one time together with an unlimited number of concubines (Guillaume, 1954, p.71). There is a stipulation, however, that all wives must be treated with strict impartiality and if a man finds it impossible to treat all equitably he should limit himself to one (Guillaume, 1954, p.71). Child marriage is permissible (Guillaume, 1954, p.169). At the time of marriage the husband gives the wife a marriage portion and this money or property remains her own (Guillaume, 1954, p.71). The Koran makes veiling advisable and this has developed into the rigid seclusion of women which confines them closely to their quarters/

quarters, excludes them from public life, and cuts them off even from corporate prayer in the mosques. A husband has full rights over the person of his wife, including the right to administer a salutary beating if she disobeys or angers him (Guillaume, 1954, p.71). He may divorce his wife at any time (Guillaume, 1954, p.71) and for any or no reason simply by pronouncing thrice the formula "I divorce thee" (Guillaume, 1954, p.171): a woman may never sue for divorce on any grounds unless she has her husband's permission to do so (Guillaume, 1954, pp. 71, 171). Finally, in respect of inheritance Sura 2:176 lays down that a man must bequeath his property equitably to his parents and kindred.

Little of this goes against Yoruba grain. Women are notoriously regarded as subordinate to man and the superior nature of man and his absolute rights over the person of his wife are heartily endorsed: nor would the Yoruba man quarrel with the injunction to treat all wives in exactly the same manner. Although the number of wives a man may have is potentially unlimited, the Koranic restriction to four causes little hardship. This number is in fact achieved or exceeded by only a very few successful men or by the traditional rulers/

rulers or obas. The importance of begetting children is well understood by Yoruba. Traditional Yoruba usage prescribes the primary rights of kin to inherit.

There are, however, certain modifications or of, /departures from, Islamic law. As far as marriage gifts are concerned native law and custom decrees that these be divided among the bride's kin although a gift is sometimes made to the bride herself. There is no trace of child marriage among the Yoruba today. One Moslem custom has, however, been adopted whereby a man may bestow his daughter when nubile upon a favourite friend without payment of any marriage fee. Seclusion of women is not traditionally practised among the Yoruba and, although some do confine their wives, the custom is not widespread. Those who do are generally priests or scholars and their motives appear to combine orthodoxy with considerations of status and prestige within the Moslem community. Dissolution of Moslem marriage is governed by Yoruba native law and involves a petition to the native court and repayment of the idanan.

Summary

This section began with an examination of/

of Yoruba religious organisation in terms of its articulation with the traditional kinship system. It was seen that the basic structural unit of the kinship system, the lineage, is also one of the primary congregational units. Thus the lineage has traditionally an important religious function. The advent of Christianity heralded an assault on the solidarity of the lineage and on the values which it mediates. This may be seen not least of all in respect of marriage. At the same time as the Christian missions abrogated the traditional religious beliefs and sanctions they substituted their own. Religious activities, formerly performed by the lineage, became the concern of the churches and this annexation has led to a loss to the lineage of one of its important functions. In spite of the modern tendency for the domestic group to assume a structurally significant primacy, it has not assumed any religious function analagous to that traditionally fulfilled by the lineage. Islam, on the other hand, while no less a foreign importation, presented less startling divergencies from indigenous values. More significantly, it neither introduced a new education system nor was it connected with a dominant white power-group. It/

It has therefore caused less disorganisation of traditional Yoruba patterns of behaviour.

SECTION 4 - EDUCATION

Education

Infancy

Childhood

Formal Education

The Educational System and
the Community

The Child

Education and Social Change

In this section I shall begin by a brief

discussion of the concept of education as it is used in this book and go on to a description of the traditional educational process and of the new formalized educational institutions. The material will cover the traditional education in its various aspects and the role of the family and the community in the education of the child. It will also discuss the role of the school in the education of the child and the role of the community in the education of the child. It will also discuss the role of the school in the education of the child and the role of the community in the education of the child.

SECTION 6. EDUCATION

Education

Infancy

Childhood

Formal Education

The Educational System and
the Community

The Child

Education and Social Change

In this section I shall begin by a brief discussion of the concept of education as used here and go on to a description of the traditional educative process and of the new formalised educational institutions. The material will show how traditionally education is an important function of the kin group and of the domestic group, which is mainly responsible for it. This function is now being assumed by the schools. As it will be impossible to cover the whole process of social maturation within the limits of this section some of the more conspicuous changes and activities only will be examined.

Education

Education may be regarded as the purposive development of an individual by the systematic imparting of knowledge. It is often suggested that in non-literate societies education does not exist. Such instruction as is given to the young is, it is said, incidental and ad hoc: there is no systematic training with the deliberate intention of modifying what is called natural development. Such a point of view makes two mistaken assumptions. In the first place it implies that the development of the individual in non-literate/

non-literate societies is unrestrained and untempered. In any society there are socially recognised ways in which the norms and values of the society are inculcated into the new member. Without some process of socialisation the society itself would cease to persist. Secondly, it suggests that, if such a process does exist, it is unperceived by members of the society, or at least, it is unsystematised and unregulated. This is not so. Yoruba adults, for example, are acutely aware of their role in the rearing of their children and of the results of good or poor training. Traditional Yoruba place a high value on their culture and realise that its maintenance depends upon its adequate transmission to their children. The traditional social structure, which is built on the lineage system, puts a premium on this and the ancestor cult provides an important motive for stressing the continuity of Yoruba culture. While it is true that there is no formal institution which has as its sole function the instruction of the child, the value of education is explicit. Professor Fortes (1938, p.5) defines the term succinctly. "It is agreed that education in the widest sense is the process by which the cultural heritage is transmitted/

transmitted from generation to generation, and that schooling is therefore only a part of it".

Education is informal in that it is carried on by observation and participation. It may be thought of as training by living. That is, the social sphere of the adult and of the child is unitary and all participate in varying degrees corresponding to the stage of physical and psychological development. There is no arbitrary division between childhood and adulthood and therefore there is no traumatic transition at adolescence. The child had the same interests, motives and purposes as the adult although at a simpler level of organisation. The social life of the child approximates to that of the adult and the differentiation is only in terms of relative capacity. The child learns the role of an adult through a practical participation in the actual situations of daily life. This participation, at first limited, becomes more extensive as he matures.

Traditionally the society is fairly homogeneous with a simple division of labour and little cutting across lineage segmentation. Even where a certain craft specialisation occurs it is organised on a lineage basis and the process of educating the child is much the same on the farm or/

or in the work-room. Economic organisation coincides with the kin-group and the child feels from his earliest years that he is a part of this system.

If there is no differentiation between childhood and adulthood, there are other differentiating factors. Perhaps the most important is that of sex. A well-defined sexual dichotomy runs through Yoruba social life and thought and this may be seen in the division of labour and other pursuits. Seniority and lineage membership also act as differentiating factors from the time when a child learns to designate a senior sibling by one term, a junior by another, or when he addresses a sister of his father by one term, the wife of his father's brother by another.

There is a marked parallelism between the trend of physiological and psychological development and that of social and cultural development and this close correlation is reflected in the notion that physiological growth is a natural process. The Yoruba have no elaborate ceremonies to mark pubescence. They accept the onset of puberty as normal and natural. Also in keeping with this conception of physical growth children are expected to acquire the elementary/

elementary bodily skills in due course and no deliberate training is given to them, although parents and elder relatives take an affectionate if sporadic interest. A man or woman may often be seen holding a small child by the arms and 'dancing' it up and down to an accompaniment of song or music. Since children are not thought to need specific training no particular individual is thought necessary to teach them and a child will be put under the care of any relative who happens to be available.

The Yoruba traditionally make no systematic use of training situations but teach through real situations. Learning is pragmatic. In the acquisition of both manual and non-manual skills a child has the test of objective achievement by which to evaluate progress and to stimulate to further effort. When he is learning how to behave properly the only test of his attainment is the reaction of other people. Moral and ethical values, norms, obligations, rules of etiquette and standards of correct conduct are learnt almost as a by-product of the normal social relations between the growing child and the other people in his environment.

As the child develops it is expected to behave/

behave in a proper manner. No-one would chastise an infant for excreting indoors but as it grows it is made to understand that this is a nuisance to those who have to keep the house clean. Other matters of decency and decorum, how to sit, how to eat, not to use the left hand and so on, are learnt without formal instruction but as direct adjustments to the situation. In the same way a child's knowledge of the kinship system, of the daily work, of ritual and ceremonial, of buying and selling, of law and custom, and of sex evolve pragmatically.

Three fundamental processes are at work in this acquisition of knowledge: identification, co-operation and imitation. The parent of the same sex is the model according to which the child regulates its conduct and from which it derives its aspirations and values. A child identifies itself first with its parent, then with its lineage. One may hear a small boy or girl of five or six talking of 'our wife' or 'our child', meaning a wife of a lineage member or a younger child.

Although I have already mentioned the child's co-operation, as far as it can, in the ordinary activities of the domestic group I refer/

refer to it again because this co-operation is an important element in the child's learning. The child's contribution to the domestic economy may be small but it is a real one performed in relation to a real need. The child's awareness of the need is an important motivation in its learning.

In learning imitation has an important role. With a Yoruba child this is marked and perhaps the most striking example of its importance is in play. From early childhood girls play at housekeeping and cooking, boys at farming, shooting and hunting. Other play includes dancing and singing. At the same time the children are actually engaging in the occupations at which they are playing. Thus play is both an imitation of the activities of their elders and a rehearsal of their skills. As the child's participation in the activities of the domestic group becomes complete, play ceases. The last stage of childhood coincides with the rapid absorption of the child into the economic system and his or her gradual acquisition of a responsible status within the social structure. To play now means to dance with one's peers and to join in ceremonies and celebrations of one's kinsfolk and neighbours.

In order to make the preceding analysis
of/

of the education of Yoruba children clear I shall give a summary of the main trends in the developmental cycle.

Infancy

The child is warmly welcomed into this world. In the traditional farming community there are no economic disabilities consequent upon having a child which make parents await it with anything than pleasure. It spends its waking time on the mother's back and its nights beside her on her bed or sleeping-mat. It is suckled whenever it is hungry and knows little restraint or frustration. If the mother is absent there are always a number of substitutes who will feed and care for it until she returns. The child is suckled for a long time, varying from fourteen months to about two years or so (cf. Talbot II, 1926, pp.356, 381. Ward, 1938, pp.45-6. Fadipe, 1940, p.160). Throughout this period sexual intercourse between the mother and the father is banned because it is thought that this would result in souring of the milk. A more up-to-date and sophisticated justification for this proscription is that the normal consequence of intercourse is pregnancy and that too/

too frequent pregnancies weaken both mother and children. A woman should start weaning her child before resuming marital relations with her husband. What in fact often happens is that sexual relations occur before weaning and that weaning coincides with the establishment of a second pregnancy. Weaning is not generally accompanied by harsh treatment although the actual process of inducing a young child to eat solid food appears somewhat alarming to the observer. The child's nostrils are firmly held by the mother with one hand while with the other she forces food, usually a mash of bean or guinea corn flour mixed with banana and oil, into the child's mouth. However, in cases where weaning is late, the child has often acquired adult eating habits anyway. It is the emotional connotations of the weaning which are traumatic. Whatever the sequence, in the child's eyes, weaning followed by intercourse between the parents or vice versa means that he is ousted from his intimate and proprietary relationship with his mother; he may no longer seek solace at her breast; his sleeping place at her side is usurped by his father of whom up to then the child has seen little: and sooner or later a younger sibling may arrive to alienate his mother's interests/

interests and affections still further.

During this period of early infancy, toilet training is completely disregarded. Neither the mother nor other adults show anger or disgust when the child soils the floor or the body of the person caring for it. Cleaning up after the child is done without fuss or comment. The Yoruba, who have an epigram for every occasion, say that no woman ought to have an unsoiled wrapper. The stains made by a child are the proud badge of maternity: a clean cloth indicates a barren woman.

Early infancy seems to be marked by peculiarly few frustrations. The most important features are lack of severe anal training, a long period of breast-feeding, adequate contact gratifications and a full measure of the mother's interest and affection. The end of the sexual avoidance between the parents and the end of suckling coincide and mark an abrupt change in the child's emotional and physical life.

Childhood

During early childhood the child is usually allowed to play near the house or in the compound under the casual supervision of an older child (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.160). Children,
in/

in fact, play a great deal. Usually there is a certain amount of sex differentiation in play (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.457), the girls as wives and mothers, the boys at hunting and so on. This contrasts sharply with the pattern of leisure time activities of the adults whose recreation is confined to dancing at ceremonial gatherings, and - on the part of the men - to drumming and hunting. (A woman has very little time for leisure. In the performance of her domestic tasks, she must make shift with extremely arduous techniques and primitive artefacts and her work seems to fill nearly all her waking hours.)

The children are free to wander from one part of the compound to another except at times when people are eating (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.381). Many compounds and houses, especially now, have no ancestral shrines or other sacred objects which children must learn to avoid, nor is any intricate code of proscriptions relating to such objects imposed upon small children.

Sleeping habits continue the infant pattern of close physical contact with the mother. If the child is the last-born it may go on sleeping with its mother until it reaches the age of about eight years. If it is dispossessed of its monopoly/

monopoly of access to the mother's bed by the birth of another child, it will sleep in a room with its other siblings or with an adult of the same sex.

From infancy to about the age of six is a time of great indulgence. A child of this age is rarely reprovved and elder children are supposed to treat it with care and gentleness (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.160). From about the sixth year of life discipline becomes more stringent and misdemeanours are severely punished. Punishment of children is inconsistent and is completely dependent on the emotional response of the individual administering it. The child transgresses or annoys: the adult responds by beating it. The severity of the punishment varies from time to time and from person to person. On the whole, however, discipline rests primarily on the inculcation of fear into the child.

General training in domestic duties starts at about six or seven. As soon as the child is old enough and sensible enough to comprehend instructions, it starts to perform small tasks, to copy the activities of the adults and to help to the best of its ability (cf. Ward, 1938, p.136. Fadipe, 1940, p.161). The part played by the child in the work of the domestic group is a progressive/

progressive one. It is expected to carry firewood or produce from the farm or the market and to help in the house. For a long time there is little or no distinction between the sexes and there is no formal segregation. The care of infants is a responsibility which both share. Similarly boys as well as girls are expected to do many other daily chores. As the child grows older its share of the domestic duties becomes greater and more regularised. By the time of adolescence there is a fairly definite division between the sexes in the duties assigned. This period is the time when the discipline foreshadowed in childhood assumes its harshest form. At an early age a boy follows his father to the farm, starting by helping with the weeding, fetching and carrying, looking after the fire, and bird-scaring. There is a steady development up to a complete proficiency in farming activities (cf. Talbot II, 1926, p.389. Fadipe, 1940, p.541). A girl fetches water, helps in the running of the household, cleaning, cooking, caring for infants, preparing and marketing the farm surplus. On the whole, boys have fewer duties than girls who, however, receive a more consistent training and have a more constructive participation/

participation in household activities. It is the proud boast of a Yoruba mother that by the age of nine years her daughter is competent and efficient in all branches of house-keeping. Nevertheless, in all this, although an older person may demonstrate the correct way of doing something, or punish the child if its labours are unsatisfactory, instruction is not formalised: the child learns by the constant repetition of admonition, precept, example and proverb.

In the same way instruction in traditional habits and customs is completely informal. The child learns by trial and error what is done and what is not done and is imperceptibly acculturated in the accepted social attitudes. From babyhood, for example, children are taught that girls are the weaker sex, boys the stronger; that the former must not take part in rough sports or activities (cf. Ward, 1938, pp.74, 122-5). Lazy people are criticised and insulted and children are exhorted to be industrious and good workers (cf. Bascom, 1951, p.492). One must respect and obey one's seniors, be generous to one's juniors. And so on.

Sexual instruction is also informal. There is little rein put on conversation in front of/

of children. A few mothers may give their daughters sexual instruction but, in general, sex knowledge is acquired by listening to the uninhibited talk of adults and by discreet observation in a society where there is little privacy.

In early childhood sex experience is confined to masturbation which goes on quite freely in public. However, the masturbation that little boys may pursue so casually and freely during early childhood disappears after the acquisition of a small pair of shorts. Sex play is now frowned upon: disapproval and shock are shown at overt homosexual practices. The same distaste is not extended to verbal sexuality and, although the normal rules of respect for elders and seniors put a certain restraint on speech, obscenity is not uncommon among children.

There is little in the way of puberty rites. Circumcision and cliterodectomy are performed in the first few days of life: nor is there any seclusion, instruction or ritual in an initiation school. On the occasion of a girl's first menstruation the women will organise a small private ceremony; a fowl will be killed and kola-nuts distributed. This informal ceremony marks the fact that she is now a nubile woman and young/

young women have told me of the feeling of importance it imparts to them.

Formal Education

Under the traditional system education may be seen as an important function of the kin group. Most closely involved in this is, of course, the domestic group with the father teaching his sons, the mother her daughters, the correct behaviour on the farm, in the house, at the shrine or in the market-place. In the compound there are numerous substitutes for father or mother and all have a right, if not a duty, to see that their child is properly trained in the accepted values, skills, abilities and manners. The period of learning is concurrent with that of physiological maturation and there is no arbitrary division between childhood and adulthood. The activities of the child and the adult differ not in kind but in extent of participation.

With the advent of the European missions, however, came also the idea of organised instruction. From the earliest days the missions aimed at the establishment of schools which they regarded as an important part of their work. For many years they had the field of education to themselves and/

and the educational system was largely the creation of missionary effort (cf. Nigeria Handbook, 1953, p.108). In 1849 the Church Missionary Society opened a teacher training centre at Abeokuta and, as the Society extended its influence among the Yoruba, set up small schools alongside its churches (cf. Nigeria Handbook, 1953, p.108). In 1876 the Catholic Mission established St. Gregory's College at Lagos and, with Catholic penetration of the interior, Catholic educational work was also extended throughout Yorubaland (cf. Nigeria Handbook, p.109). In 1878 the Methodist Mission, which had also been actively engaged in promoting scholastic education, opened a high school for boys and another for girls in Lagos (cf. Nigeria Handbook, 1953, p.108). In 1899 the first government school was founded in Lagos, for the purpose of educating Moslem children. By 1908 there were 40 government schools in the Southern Provinces - now known as the Eastern and Western Regions (cf. Nigeria Handbook, 1953, p.110). In 1913 it was estimated that the total school enrolment in the Southern Provinces was 35,756 children (Nigeria Handbook, 1953, p.110). This had risen to 74,000 in 1918 (Nigeria Handbook, 1953, p.111). By 1929 the proportion of girls to boys in the school population was about one in six (Nigeria Handbook, 1953, p.111). Demand for a Western type/

type of education continued to spread and this demand was intensified during the 1939-45 war. In 1937 the primary school enrolment in the whole of the Southern Provinces was 154,762. By 1947 this had risen to an estimated 600,000 or about a third of the estimated school-age population (Nigeria Handbook, 1953, p.114). At the end of 1950 the position as regards schools in the Western Region was as follows (Nigeria Handbook, 1953, p.117):

Primary

Government	31
Native Administration	128
Voluntary Agencies	2246
Private	1428

Secondary: Boys

Approved to Class VI	20
Approved for other classes	10
Recognised but not approved	9

Secondary: Girls

Approved to Class VI	5
Approved for other classes	2
Recognised but not approved	-

In 1954 the Government introduced universal free primary education. Prior to the implementation of this policy, however, the first essential question to be solved was that of teacher training. In 1951 the output of teacher training colleges was about 800 per annum. By 1953 sixteen additional training colleges were opened and/

and existing ones were enlarged until the annual output of trained teachers exceeded 3,000 in January 1956. During the same period the number of secondary schools was more than doubled. With the introduction of the free primary education scheme schools were built throughout the Western Region to accommodate the great influx of children. In 1955 the number of children enrolled in primary schools was 400,000. With free primary education the proportion of boys to girls is becoming more even, although for long the education of girls was not considered as important as that of boys (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.260). The conservatism of women may perhaps be linked with this.

It has been pointed out that education was for many years the preserve of the missions which had full control of the school curriculum, finance, examinations and teachers' qualifications. However, the policy of the Western Regional Government is towards secularisation of the educational system, and it was decided that the proportion of new schools to be built and operated by Local Authorities should be laid down at 60%, while the voluntary agencies should be restricted to 40% (Annual Report of the Education Department, 1953-1954, p.4). Both the form and the content of the/

the curriculum have been standardised and an Inspectorate has been established.

It is difficult to estimate the present number of Yoruba who have received some form of education.¹ Table 7 of the Population Census of Nigeria, 1952-53, states that in the Western Region 9.5% have reached elementary class IV (standard II) or higher and that there are 6.1% of other literates. In Lagos the corresponding proportions are 33.7% and 15.4%. Local variations are wide. In Lagos about half the population 7 years of age and over is literate. In other urban centres of the Western Region the literacy rate varies between 30 and 40 per cent. In the rural areas, however, hardly anyone can read or write.

The Educational System and the Community²

In discussing the various types of educational establishment and their relationship with the local community, three principal points are/

¹ Leith-Ross (1956, p.180), referring to both the Western and the Eastern Regions, suggests that about 5% of the total population may be regarded as educated, without however defining her criterion of educated.

² This is based on the argument in Read, 1956, pp.2-5.

are stressed, the degree of integration of the institution with the local community, the value placed upon the institution, and the extent to which the institution acts as catalyst in the process of change.

Primary education is completely in the hands of African teachers. The schools appear to be well integrated into the social structure of the local community. Their pupils live at home and the schools are generally managed by a group of local people, representing either a religious body or a local council. Primary education appears to be accepted as a normal present-day feature of child-training. Although it is difficult to assess the extent to which the primary schools represent a medium of change, this would appear to be mainly in the form of subtle distillation of new ideas and values.

The majority of secondary schools are boarding schools with both Nigerian and expatriate staff. Each school forms a self-contained little community which usually stands well outside the social life and social structure of the local community. In this lack of social integration there is a great contrast with the primary school. There is great popular demand for/

for secondary education and the parents express their appreciation of its social value by paying relatively large annual fees. The secondary school is a potent factor in social change. Not only is the pupil undergoing an education based largely on the Western European model: he is also subjected to the influence of living a western type of life and being subjected daily to an environment where the values of the West are overtly and covertly propagated.

Teacher training colleges are also self-contained residential units, usually not highly integrated into the local structure. However, they do have a link with the local community through the teaching practice of their students in the local primary schools. In most cases the value placed on such colleges, even by the students themselves, is less than on secondary schools. In general, the academic requirements are lower than for the latter and many students regard the colleges as a means of improving their educational standard before attempting the school certificate examination privately. The role of the colleges in social change is difficult to assess. To a certain extent western values are inculcated, but the process is neither so regular nor so consistent as/

as in the secondary school.

Other forms of education - technical training or university education - are very highly valued. Such sources of education are almost completely divorced from Yoruba life and thought and play an important part in initiating change.

The Child

Viewed from another point, what does the new system of education mean for the child? In the first five or six years, a child's life is little different from before. If he belongs to a home where father and mother are both highly educated, his mother may be at work and he may be left in the care of an illiterate relative or servant, both conservative elements. It is when a child attends school that the cleavage between old and new becomes apparent. The spread of education has profound repercussions on childhood and these will become more evident as more children come to enjoy the benefits of the Western Region Government's free education programme. A child that attends primary school must of necessity spend much time away from home. The period when a boy is traditionally attached to his father and a girl to her mother in order to acquire the necessary/

necessary skills and knowledge is occupied by attendance at school. In some cases the child is expected to perform its household chores in addition to going to school and Fadipe (1940, p.260) suggests that in these cases housework is fairly evenly distributed between the sexes, in contrast with the traditional patterning of the division of labour. Children of well-educated parents are rarely expected to do any work in the home (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.264). Instead they have ample time to play and to develop. Such children are noticeably much more individual than those reared according to the traditional pattern.

Associated with the pattern of a child working in the house and attending school a custom has grown up which is reminiscent in its worst examples of the traditional Yoruba system of pawning. A child may be sent to a relative or friend in one of the larger towns (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.172) and there it is expected to render services in return for board and lodging and school-fees (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.274). The child is usually between the ages of six and eighteen. In some households there is only one such dependent child whose services may be augmented by those of a hired servant: in other cases there may be as many as four or five of/

of either sex (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.279). It is claimed that in this way the child gets the benefit of educational facilities, formerly better in the towns, is properly trained and runs no danger of being spoilt by indulgent parents. Unfortunately the optimum conditions rarely obtain. A scholar or a housemaid, as such children are known, often receives harsh treatment, too arduous work and too severe discipline and corporal punishment (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.272). The child may be unhappy, unable to profit from the education provided and isolated from the kinsfolk who might take his part.

It has already been pointed out that most secondary schools are boarding schools and this means that when a child becomes a pupil at the minimum age of 12 he or she will most probably remain in this alien environment for the next six years. When the boy or girl goes home on holiday he or she will be in a privileged position, especially if the home-life is that of a traditional farming community. The child will not be expected to do any work and will be treated with a certain amount of respect. Schoolchildren, however, find that this attitude wears off if they stay too long at home; their half-siblings and other relatives will be jealous of their prerogatives/

prerogatives and resentful of their idleness. Many secondary schoolchildren find it a relief to leave the jealous atmosphere of a polygamous household and return to the ordered life in the boarding school.

When young men or women proceed further in their education they become even more withdrawn from Yoruba life and custom. Their knowledge of the niceties of traditional usage and ceremonial becomes perfunctory and superficial. We have seen how in the traditional environment Yoruba custom is transmitted by an imperceptible process of acculturational maturation. Learning goes on through the process of living traditional life. But where the individual no longer participates he no longer learns. With the new wave of national consciousness the resulting ignorance of Yoruba custom and values worries many young parents. Many make rather abortive efforts to instruct their children or turn to the older generation to do so. The former ambition to send their children to the United Kingdom for schooling has become tempered and it is held that they must first be brought up in their national environment before being placed within the influence of an alien culture.

Education and Social Change

The interaction between the new formal education and changes in the social structure may be examined at two levels. In the first place it may be seen that the community, relying on an early induction of the children into the economic, ritual and social aspects of the life of the group, suffers when they are removed from the traditional educational routine. When this disturbance in the customary educational pattern is coincident with a more or less explicit inculcation of social values which attack the foundations of the traditional structure, the two factors work together to produce a social re-organisation.

The influence of formal education has been powerful in the process of change. It has contributed to the growth of a new class of people basing their status on their achievements,¹ it has encouraged occupational and geographical mobility; it has assisted in the growth of new structural/

¹ It is in terms of its instrumentality that most Yoruba regard education. Knowledge itself does not suffice. It must lead to an influential and lucrative appointment or the effort will have been wasted. In other words, knowledge is perceived as the embodiment of a certain exchange value.

structural patterns and fostered the emergence of non-traditional social groupings.

It is, however, at the level of the kinship group that our interest lies here. In this section I have shown that the institutionalisation of education has usurped one of the traditional functions of the group. The domestic group has ceded the training of its children to the school which has an important part to play in preparing the children for participation in the modern occupational system.

SECTION 7. POLITICAL ORGANISATION

The Yoruba Kingdoms

Oyo, the Metropolis

Provincial Government

Political Organisation

The Oba

Political Changes

Indirect Rule and Local Government

Central Government

The Judicial System

Party Politics

Political Developments and the
Lineage

In Section 7 I shall describe the traditional Yoruba political system - a system of city-monarchies owing allegiance to the Alafin of Oyo. The political structure of each of these city-states had as its basic unit the lineage which was the unit of representation. A parallel might be drawn between the relation of the lineages to each other and to the royal lineage, and the relation of the city-states to each other and to Oyo. The material will show how the establishment of British authority inaugurated a slow process of political change, the end result being a government based on domiciliary representation, and political alignments in terms of political parties catering for those of like interests. One important effect is that the lineage is no longer the political unit. Its political function has been arrogated by political party and by the various organs of government.

The Yoruba Kingdoms

The Yoruba do not form a single homogeneous group but comprise a number of related sections, each of which has a linguistic, political and social unity. However, each recognises itself as part of a larger entity with common origins/

origins, language, traditions and, to a certain extent, culture and organisation. This idea of membership of a more inclusive whole is quite explicit and has been encouraged in recent years by one of the political parties. The wider allegiance does not in any way vitiate one's sub-tribal loyalties, nor are there any groups or individuals who are in any doubt as to their sub-tribal affiliation.

The inter-relations of the various sections or sub-tribes are justified in terms of historical associations. Oyo was the metropolitan centre and the rulers of the other sub-tribes validate their positions by myths of origin which claim for them descent either from one of the legendary Alafins of Oyo or from faithful servants or champions of one or other of the Alafins who rewarded their fidelity and service by granting them one of the sub-kingdoms to hold in feoff.

The great wars of the nineteenth century were the occasion of a vast amount of mobility. Whole townships were evacuated or shifted to other sites under pressure of unfriendly neighbours. Old Oyo was abandoned after the disastrous Fulani attack. Further south, many of the/

the original Egba inhabitants of Ibadan left their native town when it became a military encampment occupied by war leaders from nearly every one of the sub-tribes. It is said that the original Ibadan emigrants were joined at Abeokuta by the inhabitants of some 153 Egba villages who were obliged by war-time exigencies to move southwards and amalgamate to form the town of Abeokuta (Johnson, 1921, pp.14, 93. Burns, 1948, p.30). Each of the constituent villages has retained its individuality and they are today grouped into four main divisions, Ake, Agura, Oke-Ona and Owu (cf. Biobaku, 1957, p.4). Each of these quarters has its own organisation and each is relatively autonomous, although Ake is accepted as the chief.

While the rise of Ibadan and Abeokuta, two of the most prominent of present day Yoruba towns, was to a large extent occasioned by the endemic state of war, others which were mentioned by Johnson (1921) as being large and influential centres are now relatively unimportant. Ife and Oyo, the spiritual and temporal headquarters of Yorubaland, retain a kind of carismatic affection and respect in the minds of the Yoruba although their importance has waned, partly perhaps because of their geographical position. Other towns such as/

as Ijaye, formerly a powerful rival to Ibadan power in the days of the civil wars, are now little more than farming villages.

The situation when the British arrived was, therefore, by no means static, nor had all the Yoruba been in situ for any length of time. It has already been noted how, as commerce with the Europeans increased, another change became apparent. Oyo, the capital, lay to the north - Old Oyo or Katunga as it was known to the Fulani was beyond Ilorin, its successor to the south of Ilorin but still well to the north of the Yoruba dominions. As the metropolis it was the centre of influence, power and authority. External interest was attracted northwards to the Moslem emirates. With the extension of European trading connections from the coast into the hinterland there was a reversal of orientation. Attention turned southward to the coast. The southern Yoruba, who had previously been regarded with derision as rough uncouth boors and disparagingly called epo or weeds, reaped the benefit of the new association and influence shifted into their hands.

Oyo, the Metropolis

Yorubaland may be thought of as being formerly/

formerly a collection of city-monarchies with that of Oyo as the suzerain. The actual effectiveness of the control of Oyo over the other kingdoms varied from time to time but all acknowledge its historical and nominal supremacy. The royal court of Oyo was an elaborate and intricate affair. According to Johnson (1921, pp. 71 et seq.) it was made up of the following:

The King

Courtiers and Household Officers of the Crown	1. Titled Officers 2. <u>Eunuchs</u> 3. <u>Ilari</u> ¹
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Ladies of the Palace	1. 8 titled ladies 2. 8 priestesses 3. other ladies of rank 4. <u>Ilari</u> 5. King's wives, <u>Ayabas</u>
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Members of the Royal Family occupying responsible positions

The Nobility	1. <u>Oyo Mesi</u> ² 2. <u>Eso</u> ³
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Political/

¹ Ilari were officials who were sent to associated or subject kingdoms to supervise the local administration and to collect tribute (Biobaku, 1957, p.2).

² The Oyo mesi shared supreme power with the Alafin, or king, in Oyo and in the other kingdoms they were the kings who ruled under the protection of the Alafin (Biobaku, 1957, p.2).

³ The Eso constituted the élite of the Alafin's armies (Biobaku, 1957, p.2).

Political authority was vested in the king, a divine person, but there was a judicious distribution of powers and functions and the political system was formed by the inter-relationship of king, title-holders and religious associations such as Ogboni, Oro and Egungun.

Provincial Government

Although the organs of the political structure of the kingdoms in general resemble those of Oyo there are certain differences in the division of function amongst them. Lloyd (1954) has shown in an analysis of the traditional political system of four Yoruba towns, how greatly their internal structure differs. However, he goes on (op. cit., p.382), "Each of the towns had a government responsible for the external relations of the towns including the declaration of war, for the maintenance of law and order, including police work, and the administration of justice, for the control of rituals affecting the whole town, and for a variety of social and economic matters such as fixing the times of harvest or bush burning."

Political Organisation

The general pattern of political organisation/

organisation is that each town has a responsible head who claims descent from the founder or conqueror who was originally invested with power from Oyo (cf. Johnson, 1921, pp.75-6). In larger towns, the centres of kingdoms, the man is known as the king, oba. He is relatively autonomous although he owes nominal allegiance to the Alafin of Oyo (cf. Forde, 1951, p.22). Smaller towns are administered by a town-head, bale, who is subject to one of the kings (Johnson, 1921, p.77).

Each town may be regarded as a federation of internally autonomous lineages. In terms of town organisation these lineages are ranked (cf. Bascom, 1951, pp. 497-8).¹ The royal lineage is composed of members of that lineage claiming to be descended from the first man to settle in that place. Other migrants arrived there and settled and these were the eponymous ancestors of the present lineage groups.

At the head of each lineage is a lineage head, bale, chosen by virtue of his age, seniority and personal ability at a meeting of both male and female lineage members. Certain lineages are/

¹ Lloyd, however, states that these lineages are theoretically of equal status (cf. Lloyd, n.d., p.27).

are invested with certain titles and where this occurs the bale will bear this hereditary title. Within the compound the bale is the acknowledged leader, the custodian of lineage land with full responsibility for its allocation, the person to whom all personal questions and problems are referred for advice and assistance, and the person who presides over all lineage meetings, rites and ceremonies. The administration of justice begins at home in the compound, where the bale is also responsible for arbitrating and adjudicating in civil disputes between compound members (cf. Ward, 1938, pp. 68-9. Fadipe, 1941, pp.138, 389. Forde, 1951, p.24).

In relation to the rest of the community the bale is the lineage representative. If one of his lineage conceives a grievance against or becomes embroiled in a dispute with a member of another lineage the bale is called upon to negotiate with his opposite number (cf. Fadipe, 1941, p.389) and he is responsible to the town authorities for the conduct of those in his compound (cf. Johnson, 1921, p.100).

In large towns lineage heads from adjacent compounds may form a ward council. One of their number is then selected as ward-head and he/

he represents the interests of the ward. The ward-head has similar functions in relation to the ward as the lineage-head has vis-à-vis the compound. He does not interfere in the internal affairs of the compounds any more than the lineage-head steps into matters of the domestic group unless they are specifically brought to his attention. The concern of the ward-head is with questions or disputes involving members of two or more of the different compounds under his aegis.

The king's council, which combines legislative, executive and judicial functions, comprises title holders of various categories. It has been pointed out that some titles are vested in certain lineages and the lineage-head holds it by virtue of being the most senior. A few titles may be awarded on merit or for services (cf. Ajisafe, 1924, p.24). Others are important titles associated with the religious organisations or cult groups. Such titles are also generally transmitted within particular lineages. In small towns each lineage has a right to at least one title of one kind or another, although in larger towns this is not always the case. Through the inter-relation of these title-holders a system is produced in which no single lineage group can dominate the town/

town and the king can act only through his council. The title-holders sit on the king's council as representatives of particular lineage groups. As such it is their duty to safeguard the interests of their own groups while considering those of the community as a whole. They must advise the ruler in the government of the kingdom. The same title-holders who assist in the administration of the town also sit in judicial capacity as the highest court (cf. Forde, 1951, p.24). At the same time they act as intermediaries between the king and his people: they are the channel through which his decisions and instructions are promulgated and through which the ordinary man may voice his opinion on current affairs, transmit dues or oppose iniquitous palace policy.

The Oba

The oba stands in the same position to the kingdom as the head of a lineage does to his lineage members. He is the guardian of his people's rights; he looks after their affairs; and he is their representative vis-à-vis the rest of the world, temporal and supernatural. In this latter aspect, as the possessor of ritual as well as political power, the king is held in great respect/

respect. It is his responsibility to ensure the safety and welfare of his people by the proper observance of state rites and ceremonies (cf. Forde, 1951, pp. 20-21).

Each royal lineage comprises a number of sub-lineages, or minor lineages, descendants of the founder of the town. Each of these minor lineages in turn should supply candidates for the throne.¹ What in fact seems to happen is that men from all branches of the royal lineage become candidates. Nevertheless membership of the appropriate minor lineage is an important, though not necessary qualification. This preliminary choice is an internal lineage affair where requirements of descent and seniority are primarily considered, as well as personal suitability. The names of the selected candidates are then submitted to an inter-regnum council of chiefs, the king-makers or oyemisi. The latter deliberate at length/

¹ Ibadan is a notable exception to this rule. There, the ruler or Olubadan is determined by a long process. A man of wealth, prominence, good deeds or exceptional merit is installed as a minor chief in the hierarchy. Thereafter there is an orderly progression through a series of titleships of ascending rank until he becomes eligible for the highest of all, that is, of course, if he survives. The process is a lengthy one and the most important personal characteristic required of an aspiring Olubadan appears to be longevity.

length on the eligibility of the candidates, taking into consideration personal qualities and qualifications, popularity and so on.¹

It may be seen, therefore, that while the king, once installed is a divine person whom in former days it was ritually dangerous even to see, this element of choice and lobbying in his selection implies the fundamental authority of the people. Although the office of king is sacred the king does not rule by divine right but by the will of the people. There is a sharp distinction between the sacred office and the individual who fills it. He is not blessed with infallibility and, subject as he is to human error, his government does not always measure up either to pre-installation expectations or to pre-election promises. As a non-sacred individual he is expendable.

Nor, should the king prove unsatisfactory, are the irate citizenry slow to exercise their discretion in this matter. Etiquette, however, demands that no direct action be taken. The/

¹ This period is one of the most profitable for the oyemisi. While they are discussing and deciding on the relative merits of the candidates, each of the latter is busy distributing largesse to these arbiters of his future.

The correct procedure is to present the oba with some token of the people's displeasure, traditionally a parrot's egg. He is then expected to withdraw permanently from temporal majesty by the least unpleasant means he may contrive. If, within a reasonable period, he has not arranged his own death it may be found unhappily necessary to assist him on his way.

In theory the oba is an absolute monarch, but in practice his authority is circumscribed (Burns, 1948, p.29). He governs his city-state with the advice and assistance of those of his chiefs who sit on his council. All routine matters are dealt with by the oba in consultation with the council and he rules less by decree than by order-in-council. However, the oba and his chiefs do not form an oligarchy. The channels of communication between the oba and the populace are direct and clear. We have seen that the chiefs hold office not only at the pleasure of the oba but as representatives selected by lineage or ward members. Their function among other things is to keep the people well-informed of the policies and activities of the oba and to keep the oba well aware of public opinion. The immediacy of public reaction to his actions is not the last check/

check on the oba's absolutism. A third limiting factor is the division of function which obtains in administration. Not only does the oba have a council of chiefs to aid him. Many of the functions of government are under the direction of other agencies such as the Ogboni society (cf. Fadipe, 1941, p. 756). We may see the oba, then, as the ultimate source of justice and government and as the high priest. But he is a symbol of sacred and profane authority rather than the instrument of its exercise. The higher echelons of the religious associations, together with other title-holders, provide the operative legislative, executive and juridicial body.

Political Changes

The influence of the British on the political structure of the Yoruba has operated in two directions. In the first place the annexation of Yorubaland has meant that, although British policy was one which implied as little disruption as possible of indigenous government, as long as this was consonant with principles of natural justice and good order (as defined by the British), the assimilation of traditional authorities into the structure of colonial government meant that

a/

a number of important changes were being initiated, not least being the introduction of systems of government and law which emphasise personal rather than group rights and liabilities. In the second place, with the spread of education, the growth in the numbers of Yoruba who have studied in the United Kingdom and elsewhere, and the aspirations for freedom from foreign domination no matter how benign, a new nationalism was born which has culminated in a strong and vociferous demand for self-government.

Indirect Rule and Local Government

In 1900 the Imperial Government took over control of administration from the Royal Niger Company. In these early days the three separate and distinct units - the Northern Nigerian Protectorate, the Southern Nigerian Protectorate and the Colony - existed independently. As has been noted, in 1906 the Southern Protectorate and the Colony were amalgamated and in 1914 this unit was joined with the Northern Protectorate. In the years 1919 to 1921 the system of native administration which had been devised in the first instance for the Northern Protectorate was extended to that part of Nigeria which includes Yorubaland/

land (Burns, 1948, p. 233. Nigeria Handbook, 1953, p.53. Fitzgerald, 1955, p.138). The man principally concerned with the establishment of the practice of indirect rule was Lord Lugard. The main characteristic of this system was that a community should be governed through the medium of existing authority (Fitzgerald, 1955, p.138). This meant that the British Government agreed to support the indigenous authority but that, in turn, the latter had to recognise the over-riding authority of the British and also to accept as adviser the local (British appointed) Resident or District Officer. It was through this British official that Central Government exercised its supervision.

The first result of Lugard's policy was to turn Yoruba rulers from more or less constitutional monarchs whose actions were restricted by a number of traditional checks and balances into autocratic despots. Under the traditional system, as has been described earlier, the kings were in theory absolute, but in practice their actions were controlled by a council of title-holders which had the right of selecting the kings: all matters of state were dealt with by the king in consultation with this council; should his reign become excessively tyrannical or were his policies unacceptable/

able, the council had the right to intimate to him that it was time there was a new ruler. Under the British the king became a salaried official whose position and authority were backed by the British Government and who was removeable only by this power (cf. Lloyd, 1956). Later there was some modification and the ruler was made the chairman of a council, membership of which at first comprised a number of arbitrarily selected chiefs, later of men (and more recently of women) elected by popular vote (cf. Colonial Office Report, 1955, p.146).

The king's position has thus undergone a series of changes. From his traditional position he has become in turn a petty dictator and then chairman of a local district council. With universal adult suffrage and elected representation his present position is a difficult one. He is generally the President of the local district council, which is made up of a majority of elected men, usually the younger, better educated, and more progressive element. The king, however, still derives his legitimacy from traditional sources - membership of a royal lineage, selection by his lineage group, acceptance by the traditional title-holders and sanction by divination. As representative/

representative of tradition he may often find himself in opposition to these new men, who, in turn, call for the removal of this reactionary anachronism. The ruler still, however, musters the support of the older and conservative sections of the community and for this among other reasons the Government (that is, the Western Region Government which, as will be explained later, is a practically autonomous authority as far as internal affairs are concerned) finds it inadvisable to dispossess the natural rulers of all the prerogatives of political power. Instead its policy has been to gain the support of the rulers, according to them all the pomp and pageantry which is by tradition theirs and purporting to guard their privileges against the iconoclastic incursions of the opposition party. Meanwhile it is quietly and busily depriving them of the substance of power. Nor does the Government hesitate to use the sanction of removal from office to coerce the recalcitrant oba to toe the appropriate line. Should any of them be tempted to harbour misconceived ideas, he has before him the salutary example of the present ex-Alafin of Oyo, who, after a long exile, was summarily deposed.

Nor is the ruler the only person whose role/

role has altered. The position of the title-holders or chiefs has also undergone a radical change. The number of chiefs appointed to the local council is now restricted and many minor chiefs have been displaced in favour of elected and often literate councillors. Their control over the actions and decisions of the ruler has been usurped by the local council. Many of their former functions - tax collection, the organisation of public works, maintenance of law and order, administration of justice - have been taken over by other agencies. Although chiefs are still elected through the lineage organisation, their influence has waned and is often less than that possessed by the new economic classes. At the same time traditional associations such as the Ogboni and the Oro have lost their political functions and have become social societies (cf. Morton-Williams, 1955). Teachers, clerks and other literate public servants are often strangers in the town and subject to fairly frequent transfer. They make little contribution to local government and show greater interest in central government politics (cf. Lloyd, 1953c).

Local government therefore is no longer in the hands of the king assisted by a council of/
of/

of title-holders selected by lineage groups on the basis of seniority and ability. Two new principles in the selection of representatives have been introduced. In the first place councillors are elected by wards, territorial and not kin units. Secondly, the councillors are elected for short specific periods.

Central Government

Until 1922 the three units - Northern Nigeria, Southern Nigeria and the Colony - although amalgamated, had been administered as three provinces. All central administration was in the hands of British officials or "expatriates" as they came to be known. It was then decided to find some means of obtaining the advice of some of the responsible members of the African community and of satisfying the demand of the people for some form of representation. In 1922 the Nigerian Council was dissolved, together with the small Legislative Council which had existed alongside it. In 1923 the first elections in Nigeria were held in Lagos and Calabar; a Legislative Council was instituted for the whole of Nigeria; and it included for the first time four elected African members (Burns, 1948, pp.225-6).

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In 1939 the Southern Provinces were divided into the Eastern and Western Provinces (Burns, 1948, p. 202. Nigeria Handbook, 1953, p.38.). In 1947, under a new constitution known as the Richards Constitution, the Provinces were called Regions and each was granted a limited autonomy (Burns, 1948, p.231. Nigeria Handbook, 1953, p.39). The Western Region emerged as a constitutional entity with a House of Assembly. This was, however, a purely deliberative and advisory body, the main object being to secure greater participation by Nigerians in the discussion of their own affairs (Nigeria Handbook, 1953, pp.47-48). In 1952, under the Macpherson Constitution, Lagos and the Colony became merged with the Western Region, a bicameral legislature was created and the new Legislature had legislative powers over a number of specific subjects enumerated in a schedule (Nigeria Handbook, 1953, p.39). It was at this time that party government was for the first time established. In 1953 a constitutional crisis was engineered by one of the political parties and conferences were held in London and Lagos, leading to a revision of the Macpherson Constitution in March 1953. By the terms of this revised version, the principle of/

of a federal system of government was agreed, the municipality of Lagos was separated from the Western Region with effect from the 1st October, 1954, and a high degree of regional autonomy was granted (Colonial Office Report, 1955, p.139). Representation was also entirely by election, a far cry from the position in 1923. In 1956 in the Western Region the franchise was extended to all males and females over the age of 21. All members of both Houses are Nigerians, as are all members of the Executive Council of Ministers.

The present position is that the Western Regional Government controls a great number of functions although certain - such as the Labour Department - are retained under Federal authority. The Federal legislature, like the Regional, is almost completely African in composition, and is elected by popular franchise. In both the Federal and Regional executives the higher branches were formerly monopolised by Europeans (cf. Burns, 1948, p.256) but the movement towards 'Nigerianisation' of higher appointments in the Public Services has produced a parity between expatriates and Nigerians which will, however, probably not long be maintained. More and more suitably qualified young men, fresh from training abroad, are coming home to/

to take up well-paid positions.

The Judicial System

To administer the law there are two distinct classes of courts which coincide to a certain extent with the dichotomy between Local Authority administration and central (Regional) government (cf. Burns, 1948, p.250. Colonial Office Report, 1955, p.87). The native courts deal with cases which arise within the traditional context and they administer customary law in so far as it is 'not repugnant to natural justice, equity and good conscience'. Decisions are arrived at and expressed in terms of native law and custom. The jurisdiction of the courts is limited in subject matter and degree according to grade, but all the courts have full and sole jurisdiction in matters relating to native law marriage, succession and land disputes (cf. Nigeria Handbook, 1953, p.94. Colonial Office Report, 1955, pp. 87-8). The native courts are presided over by local chiefs who are assisted by a salaried official, the court clerk. The District Adviser's¹ duties are confined to supervision. To protect the unsophisticated/

¹ Until recently he was known as the District Officer.

unsophisticated who came before the native court, legal practitioners, that is those who had recognised legal qualifications, were prohibited from appearing in the native courts.

The other legal system which obtains side by side with the native courts is that based on the English system and differing little in procedure from English Courts of Law. There is a High Court and a number of Magistrates who are stationed throughout the Region. The law at present in force consists of certain English Statutes, a number of local Ordinances and the corpus of English Common Law. (Cf. Nigeria Handbook, 1953, p.93. Colonial Office Report, 1955, pp.87, 88.)

In recent years the separation between the two systems has tended to become less clear cut. With changing conditions the cases coming before the native courts are often difficult to resolve solely in terms of traditional custom. In addition, appeals to a higher court are referred to the High Court for hearing. In order to ensure that criteria of English law are satisfied, as well as those of native law and custom, there is a tendency to appoint native court judges who are also qualified lawyers. In Abeokuta, for example, the Judge of the Grade A court is a man who has studied and/

and qualified in England, as is the Judge of the native court of appeal in Ibadan.

Party Politics

The movement for self-government¹ is strong and widely supported although certain conservative professional men feel that the premature withdrawal of the British would leave the country at the mercy of inexperienced demagogues. However, it is felt to be unwise to express such an unpopular view in public. The recent London Conference has postponed the date of independence until 1960. But postponement has only increased the demand for independence by the Nigerians, who have the example of Ghana to inspire them.

Until 1951 much of Nigerian political activity was directed against British Imperialism (cf. Lloyd, 1955b, p.707). United against the common enemy there was little advantage in dissident factions engaging each other in internal dispute. Nationalist politics started in Lagos where most of the present political leaders were associates in the now defunct Nigerian Youth Movement/

¹ S.G. or S.G.N. (self-government now) are popular political slogans which may appear in party manifestos, newspapers or scrawled on walls.

Movement. When Dr. Azikiwe, the present Premier of the Eastern Region, resigned from the Movement the Ibo members followed their tribesman and joined the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (the N.C.N.C.) which he created in 1944. Many Yoruba did likewise. In 1945 the Yoruba intellectuals, who resented the fact that they did not get as much control of the leadership of the new organisation as they desired, returned to the fold of the Nigerian Youth Movement and carried on a vocal warfare against Dr. Azikiwe and the N.C.N.C.

About this time Chief Obafemi Awolowo, now Premier of the Western Region, returned from England and assisted in the formation of the Egbe Omo Oduduwa, a Yoruba cultural organisation. Under its influence Yoruba tribalism was encouraged and grew rapidly. For some time, however, the Egbe Omo Oduduwa restricted itself to social and cultural activities. When preparations started for the 1951 elections a political wing of the Egbe was created and called the Action Committee. A few months before the election the name was changed to the Action Group (A.G.) and efforts were made to dissociate it from the Egbe Omo Oduduwa. These were not altogether successful.

Although part of the programme of the Action/

Action Group has been directed to making the Yoruba tribally conscious and although to a certain extent the N.C.N.C. and the Action Group tend to be identified with tribal groups, such an identification is neither complete nor direct. Politics in the Western Region are less a matter of ideology than of personality and much seems to depend on local factors (cf. Lloyd, 1955b, p.707). If the oba, the local ruler, for example, favours the Action Group his opponents gravitate to the ranks of the N.C.N.C. If, on the other hand, he joins the N.C.N.C. the opposition will become staunch Action Groupers. Since one of the policies of the Action Group has been to seek the support of the natural rulers, the result has been that among the Yoruba the N.C.N.C. has tended to become the party of the disaffected, the dissatisfied and the agitators, while the Action Group has become a stronghold of the conservative and professional element (cf. Lloyd, 1955b, pp.695-6). Garigue (1954, p.224) points out that "while, however, the success of the Action Group was due to the support it received from the traditional elements, as well as from those who had accepted new political ideas, the elected representatives all came from the occupational groups which were acquiring greater/

greater importance in the social life of Nigeria".

The Action Group Government's schedule of priorities is well exemplified by its proposed expenditure programme for the five year period 1955-1960. Out of a total budget of £104,758,000 the largest single amount is ascribed to Education, under which heading lies £34,063,000 or nearly one third of the total expenditure (Development of the Western Region of Nigeria, 1955-1960, Sessional Paper No. 4 of 1955, p.21). It is the Government's avowed intention to replace as many expatriates by Nigerians with suitable qualifications in as short a time as possible. The fear of an economic domination is as strong as that of colonial domination. The first step towards economic and political self-sufficiency is the expansion of educational facilities.

Political Development and the Lineage

What are the effects of all the political developments on the traditional kinship organisation? In the first place the advent of party politics and the introduction of representation based on residential qualifications mean that the principle of representation has changed. The kin group is no longer the basis, as it was when/

when each lineage was represented by the lineage head. In small towns and villages, however, where the population is static, kinship affiliation and residential patterns still coincide so that representation may still cover the same units or an aggregation of these. It is in towns where there is a large mobile population, including numbers of strangers, that the divorce between the old and new political organisation becomes most marked. The new electorate is organised on the basis of allegiance to occupational, social and other forms of association. Under these circumstances kinship affiliation loses its relevance.

The idea of political parties with distinct programmes is slowly becoming explicit. In areas where traditional ways endure, party membership is to a large extent determined by the lineage head and all the lineage members and their wives follow his lead. In the towns where political consciousness is more alive, it is not unusual to find siblings under different political banners. There are few wives, however, who would be so bold as to defy their husbands by differing from them on this issue.¹

In/

¹ I know of only one woman who did so and she was much criticised by both men and women.

In short, it is apparent that in the political system also the lineage has lost its structural importance. It is no longer the functional unit of representation or organisation. Specialised agencies, such as the Courts, government departments, local councils, legislative bodies and the political parties, have taken over functions which are traditionally its.

SECTION 8. ECONOMIC ORGANISATION

Land Tenure

The Traditional Division of Labour

Commercial Agriculture

Trade

Industrialisation

Effects of a Money Economy

Status vs. Achievement

Economic Changes and Kinship
Organisation

In Section 8 an examination of the traditional economic system will show how the lineage controls primary resources, although the basic working unit is the domestic group. In the organisation of labour kinship plays an important part. A cash crop, trade and modern commercial and industrial developments have, however, brought a money economy and a complex division of labour; occupational status supercedes kinship status; and the economic function of the lineage is taken over by a highly differentiated and specialised occupational system.

Land Tenure

Traditional Yoruba economy is based on subsistence farming, that is, on the cultivation of agricultural produce sufficient to sustain the farmer and his dependents in the staples of life without the necessity of recourse to outside sources. Even today agriculture remains the principal economic pursuit and it has been suggested that some 80% of the working population of Nigeria is engaged either full or part-time in agriculture (Milliken, 1953, p.76). The prime consideration therefore is the land.

The position with regard to land-holding/

holding is commonly formulated by ascribing ownership to persons of authority (cf. Forde, 1934, p.157). Johnson (1921, p.95) points out that theoretically all land belongs to the Alafin of Oyo but that each oba holds his land for his own people and no outsider may occupy it without his permission (cf. also Ward, 1938, p.78). Land which is not effectively occupied reverts to the oba (cf. Johnson, 1921, p.95). In fact, however, effective title to land is vested in the lineage (cf. Forde, 1951, p.25) and it has been noted that one of the functions of the bale, the lineage head, is to apportion it to members according to their needs. The head of each domestic group is entitled to the enjoyment of sufficient land, within the limits imposed by availability, for the support of his household (cf. Burns, 1948, p.246). Continued use is guaranteed by good behaviour and there is little possibility of dispossession (cf. Forde, 1945, p.158. Burns, 1948, p.246). There is, then, a number of persons in a series from Alafin, oba, lineage-head to household head who have rights in the land. Forde (1934, p.157) points out that "these rights operating one within another might appear to afford many opportunities for friction", but disputes between superior and inferior/

inferior are rare since effective occupation is the main sanction of possession. Johnson (1921, p.95) states that land once given is never taken back, even if it is not at the particular moment being utilised, provided there are marks of occupation. However, nominal ownership does not give individual and exclusive rights to land with complete powers of alienation (Forde, 1934, p.157). Reversionary rights of ownership fall to the maximal lineage although in practice the land is held by a smaller segment. Usufruct, as has been pointed out above, is vested in the still smaller domestic group and inheritance of rights of occupation is within this group. When the head of a domestic group dies the land may be inherited by a younger sibling but modern practice encourages inheritance by his own children (cf. Forde, 1934, p.158. Burns, 1948, p.246). Preference is for male heirs, but there is no proscription on the inheritance of usufructory rights by a woman. A woman may be the owner of a certain piece of land in the sense that she has the right to cultivate it and she may pass on this right to her children, although by birth they are members of/

of another lineage, that of their father.¹ The descent of rights to use of land from parent to daughter does not, however, impair the ultimate rights of the lineage to the land (cf. Burns, 1948, p.246). Finally, "it is noteworthy that if a woman herself has been acquired, the person to whom she falls does not thereby acquire the property she may have. She still remains exclusive control of that. The husband has not the right to take over even a part of the land belonging to a wife, or to use it without her permission" (Ward, 1938, p.79. cf. also Ajisafe, 1924, p.7).

Land may never be alienated (cf. Johnson, 1921, p.95. Ajisafe, 1924, p.6. Forde, 1934, p.158. Ward, 1938, p.79. Burns, 1948, p.246). A man may pledge or pawn his land, but he always has rights of redemption. There are four ways in which land may be obtained. The first and most important is through lineage affiliation. The second is by a process of adoption into a lineage. If a stranger is accepted as a lineage member use of/

¹ In Forde (1951, p.26) it is suggested that these children must become members of the mother's lineage before they may acquire, through the mother, rights to use of land. As far as I could discover, however, among the Egba this is not the case.

of land may be granted to him for life and to his heirs in perpetuity. This may occur, for instance, when a stranger marries a daughter of the lineage and takes up residence in the lineage compound. Formerly land might also be acquired by clearing virgin bush after obtaining the permission of the ruler. Such cleared land would then be inherited in the customary manner by the patrilineal descendants of the first cultivator. Fourthly, use of the land may be loaned or leased for short terms and an annual gift or tribute signifies the over-riding rights of the lessor.

As the land is associated with a particular group, the lineage, all the members of this group have an interest in it. The land belongs not only to living members but also to dead members - the ancestors - whose aid is essential for the well-being and prosperity of the lineage. It is a link between them and their living descendants, and it is from them that the living have inherited the right to use the land. In the same way the present occupants are trustees for all future generations. There is therefore a ritual attitude towards the land and this religious aspect may suggest a reason for the reluctance to alienate it (cf. Forde, 1934, p.157. Nigeria Handbook, 1953/

1953, pp. 102-3).

The Traditional Division of Labour

The land is not farmed by the lineage as a whole (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.417). Each domestic group within the compound cultivates an area large enough to satisfy its requirements. This domestic group, which forms the unit of production and consumption, may comprise a man, his wife or wives and their unmarried children. It may occasionally also include the man's mother, father or some other elderly dependant, a younger sibling, perhaps a younger brother with his wives and children, and the wives and children of married sons. Often, on marriage, land is assigned to a young man from lineage resources and he may become independent of his father (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.347). This is by no means always the case, however, and married brothers, although allotted a small plot of their own (cf. Johnson, 1921, pp.102-3) often remain part of the economic unit until this is broken up by the death of the father. Only full siblings will then remain together and even this is rare. The farming unit therefore coincides basically with the domestic group, although through time it may develop into a/

a nuclear lineage group of male agnates which, however, is of finite duration.

Traditionally the farms were cultivated by a system of shifting agriculture, that is, an area would be cleared, often by fire, and crops planted. When the soil was exhausted the plot would be temporarily abandoned and another clearing made (cf. Forde, 1934, p.154. Burns, 1948, p.276). Whilst the compound in the town is the official residence, those who are active farmers may spend most of their time in a village on the farm, in houses of rough temporary construction (cf. Forde, 1934, p.134. Fadipe, 1940, p.520).

Most of the actual farm-work is done by men (cf. Forde, 1934, p.153. Fadipe, 1940, p.350. Forde, 1951, p.6). Women assist in harvesting (cf. Johnson, 1921, p.118. Ward, 1938, p.128. Fadipe, 1940, p.522) but in general take little part in farming. They devote more time to processing the produce for domestic consumption and marketing any surplus (Forde, 1951, p.6. Fadipe, 1940, p.350). Women's main tasks lie in the home, in cooking and keeping house, in tending the livestock, in caring for the children (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.349). Men must supply food and maintain the dwelling.

The/

The farm, then, is worked by the male members of the domestic group amongst whom the produce is allocated by the head. There are, however, certain forms of co-operative work groups upon which a farmer may call when help is needed. The first is the aro, a group of about six to twelve men, usually agnatic kin, who work for a day in turn on each other's farm. The owe is a larger group of agnates and affines who work for a day or two building or thatching houses in return for food and palm-wine. Other forms of collective labour exist, but these are the most important to the farmer. The main point to note is that the composition of the groups is determined by obligations of kinship and marriage (cf. Fadipe, 1940, pp.527, 763. Morton-Williams, 1953).

An important sphere of women's activities is the market-place. Yoruba women are indefatigable traders in whose hands lies most of the trade in locally produced foodstuffs as well as imported trade goods (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.904. Forde, 1951, p.8). Marketing may, indeed, assume an important part in the domestic economy. It is upon the proceeds of her trading that a woman depends for any elaboration of her standard of living. If she wishes any extras in the way of clothing/

clothing for herself or her children it is her own responsibility. It is usual for the husband to provide the capital or goods for a wife's first trading venture (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.348). The profits are her exclusive property (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.349), although strictly she should repay the capital amount to her husband.

Apart from the major sexual division of labour there is traditionally a certain measure of specialisation. Hunters, for example, formed a special occupational caste with regulations and with specific functions, the principal of which were, in peace-time, policing, in war-time, reconnaissance. Other specialists are smiths, carvers, leather-workers, weavers, doctors and drummers. These, however, usually combine their calling with farming. Men employed in a craft are almost always members of the same lineage, sharing a common place of work (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.538. Lloyd, 1953a, p.31). The training of a craftsman differs little in principle from that of a farmer's son; a boy assists his father, watches and learns. There is little communal co-operation within the compound and the labour group coincides with the domestic group. Nevertheless, the structure of the craft organisation is/

is the lineage structure, the craft meeting is the lineage meeting; the craft head is the compound head, the most senior man in the lineage (cf. Lloyd, 1953a, p.43).

Women's crafts include spinning, dyeing and pottery and are often taught by a mother to her daughter. There is, however, no organisation comparable to that of the men. Since marriage is patrilocal there is a dispersion of women from their natal compound, and this makes the establishment of a craft organisation difficult (cf. Lloyd, 1953a, p.42).

In the traditional situation, then, the lineage structure and the economic structure tend to coincide. That is, primary resources are in the hands of the kinship group and labour organisation is in terms of this group. Although the unit of training and production is in fact restricted to a nuclear segment of the kinship group, yet the individual bases his rights to the use of resources on his membership of the lineage. In addition, members of a lineage group have a collective responsibility for the contribution of goods and services for the marriage, funeral and other ceremonies of fellow members. The group must provide for the care of its elder or indigent members/

members and its members must perform mutual services during critical periods of the farming cycle, for the construction of a house or any other important task undertaken by any of its members.

Commercial Agriculture

One of the most important of the factors promoting change has been the substitution of a cash crop for subsistence farming. Formerly the peasant farmer was content to grow enough food to keep himself and his dependants alive, with perhaps a small surplus for trading purposes. Now the Yoruba farmer can grow a cash crop for export and with the money he gets for his cocoa he buys the things he wants from Europe or America. He has been introduced to the world market.

Nigeria is essentially a producer of primary products. The production of food-stuff for local consumption is still a most important part of the agriculture and home grown crops make the country practically self-supporting in food, in certain items of which there is a considerable internal trade. Nevertheless, there is a valuable agricultural product - cocoa - available for export. Although somewhat overshadowed by Ghana, Nigeria/

Nigeria ranks third among the world's producers of cocoa. It is grown by individual African farmers, the principal area being in the Oyo and Ondo districts. Virtually the whole crop is exported, mainly to the United Kingdom, although cocoa is also an important dollar earner. The passing of a largely subsistence economy and the growth of commercial agriculture involves specialisation in production, processing and distribution and the development of a monetary economy with all its implications.

Trade

Trade and commerce between Europe and Nigeria began as far back as the 15th and 16th centuries when Portugese and English visited Benin. From that time European merchants came to exchange some of the products of Europe for pepper, ivory and palm-oil. The immense profits offered by the slave trade superseded this. Unfortunate Africans were bartered for spirits, firearms and ammunition. After the abolition of slavery, commercial interest turned again to palm-oil, kernels and later to the even more important commodity, cocoa. Although long before the foreign merchants came to their shores the Yoruba/

Yoruba were keen traders, using a kind of money and with a number of large and well organised markets, external trade was after the establishment of British authority monopolised by foreign firms and until a few years ago was almost exclusively operated by them. Nigerian activity was confined to the role of the middle man. The position is altering and, while the most important of the importing and exporting houses are still predominantly European, many Nigerians are entering the field. At the same time, under the Marketing Board System,¹ Nigerians are playing an increasingly important part in the economic development of their country.

Approximately two-thirds of the internal distribution of imported goods is controlled by overseas firms with stores in the country. From these stores goods are passed to the retailers in the local markets through medium-sized African, Syrian/

¹ The four Produce Marketing Boards (for cocoa, groundnuts, palm oil and cotton) are independent bodies established with the aim of ensuring stable prices for producers, orderly marketing, improvement in quality and scientific research, and financial provision for the development of the areas of production. Approximately 75% of Nigeria's imports in recent years has been made up of produce handled by these Boards (Colonial Office Report, 1953, p.43).

Syrian or Lebanese wholesalers. The retail trade is almost completely monopolised by the women whose activities range from those of large-scale entrepreneurs to petty traders selling individual cigarettes (cf. Colonial Office Report, 1953, p.32).

Industrialisation

Although the economy of the Western Region is primarily agricultural, plans are being made for increasing industrialisation. In recent years there has been an expansion of secondary light industries. These include the Nigerian Tobacco Company's cigarette factory at Ibadan, the Nigeria Brewery Ltd. at Lagos¹ and the Western Region Production and Development Board's² fruit canning factory at Ibadan.

Other new small scale private industries include tyre-retreading at Ibadan, a fruit juice industry at Abeokuta, tile making at Ibadan, textile, soap and margarine factories in Lagos³ not/

¹ Not, politically speaking, a part of the Western Region, but it is difficult to dissociate the two socially and economically.

² A public corporation.

³ See note 1 above.

not to mention the modern cottage industries at Ojo and Ado-Ekiti. But in a region where the annual income per head is about £34 and the revenue roughly £2 per capita, the need for capital for economic development is great (Development of the Western Region of Nigeria, 1955-1960, Sessional Paper No. 4 of 1955, p.48). In 1956, therefore, the Premier of the Region, Chief Awolowo, undertook a long economic mission abroad and invited the investment of substantial foreign capital.

Effects of a Money Economy

The cultivation of economic crops and the growth of commerce has meant the introduction of a monetary economy. This has had far-reaching implications. One of the first effects has been a modification in the traditional conception of the ownership of land. It has been shown that land is owned in the sense that it is regarded as being associated with the lineage in such a way that it may not be alienated from the lineage which possesses reversionary rights in it. The introduction of a monetary economy, the pressure on available land, the spread of Western ideas of ownership and the realisation that land has a commercial value, place the traditional principles of/

of land tenure in obvious danger. Land is now regarded as negotiable property and the ritual aspects are becoming less and less important. Some claim individual ownership and this tendency has been marked by the increased transfer of land. This has led to a great deal of confusion since, in many cases, the title to the land is obscured by the fact that it is vested in the lineage. The courts have usually held that lineage land cannot be alienated without the consent of all members of the lineage. But with the dispersion of lineage members and the breakdown of its solidarity, such consent is not always easy to obtain. Nevertheless alienation of land continues and outright sale or gift is often recognised. This trend is, however, not universal. Comhaire (1956, p.50) quotes a ruling of the "Supreme Court, 23rd February, 1938", Law Reports, Lagos, Vol. 14, p.10:

"Now, with all due respect to the opinion expressed by Speed, Acting Chief Justice, in the case of Lewis v. Bankole (1883) to the effect that family ownership is a dying institution, I am bound to place on record my view that notwithstanding the lapse of nearly a generation since that judgement was delivered the institution of family ownership is still a very live force in native tenure in Lagos. The purpose of the institution is, as its name implies, to provide a place where members of the family can reside if they so desire and, so long as that purpose is still capable of achievement, I conceive/

conceive that it would be very wrong for the Court to order the sale of property subject to this form of tenure"

Of Lagos, where the problem of the co-existence of two different sets of values lends itself increasingly to conflict and where land disputes come before the courts with monotonous regularity, Meek (1946, p.297) writes:

" there is plenty of evidence to show that even in the progressive Colony of Lagos family ownership continues to be an integral feature of the social life and that any sweeping change in the system of land tenure would cause widespread disturbance. So long as the social system of Africans continues to differ from that of Europeans, the African system of land-holding cannot be assimilated to that contemplated by English law."

A concomitant of the economic developments is the improvements in communications and in transport facilities. A railway line, started in 1896, runs north from Lagos through the Western Region to the Northern Region and the surrounding countryside is tapped by a network of roads. Most goods are transported by lorry and most of this heavy road haulage business is in the hands of Nigerians. On the 31st March, 1953, the number of current driving licences was:-

	<u>Commercial</u>	<u>Private</u>
Lagos	1,950	4,450
Western Region	2,850	2,600

(Colonial/

(Colonial Office Report, 1955, p.111).

Another aspect of the introduction of a money economy is the growth of a labour force. Under traditional farming conditions each man is an independent worker in the sense that he subsists on the fruits of his own labour. From time to time he may receive the help of others through certain recognised institutions. For example, slavery and pawning existed formerly, although neither of these resembled the system of American plantation slavery. The other type of co-operation comprises certain community enterprises whereby a number of men may assist in the farmwork of another. However, these are short term, and usually ad hoc, arrangements depending principally on claims of kith and kin. There is nothing in the nature of a man selling his labour to another.

Originally the main purchasers of this new commodity were the Government and expatriate (non-Nigerian) firms. Now with the growth of an absentee farmer and entrepreneur class, more and more Nigerians are being employed by fellow Africans, and a heterogeneous, largely unskilled and partly illiterate wage-earning population is being created. To counteract the problems which arise in master-servant and management-labour relations/

relations the Government has set up Labour Departments, and trade union officials from the United Kingdom are attached to these departments to assist and advise.

Associated closely with the growth of a labour force, within the nexus of a cash economy, is an increasing division of labour. It has been seen that this exists in an elementary form in the traditional system as a simple division between the sexes. There are in addition a few specialists. However, under modern conditions the division of labour is developing to a notable extent. Not only has the total range increased: the differentiation within each area of work has multiplied. The tendency is for the individual to develop the performance of one specialised function. This means that a lineage no longer has occupational unity. There are now a large number of its members who are independent craftsmen, traders or workers who, if they prosper, do not share their wealth with their kinsmen. Modern crafts such as carpentry and tailoring are not confined to lineages and the modern craft organisation is the guild, a non-kin association (Lloyd, 1953a). The situation, therefore, is one in which, as the division/

division of labour becomes more complex, work becomes less commonly discharged as a joint enterprise and more frequently performed as an individual effort. Its performance carries fewer implications of participation in the life of the kinship group but rather of a practical activity directed chiefly to gaining a livelihood. With the break-up of the traditional division of labour, the distinctions between men's work and women's work are not clear and have not yet been drawn. In non-traditional areas of occupation the division of labour between the sexes is less rigidly defined.

A wider implication of the new economy is Nigeria's involvement in the world economic system. Nigeria is influenced by, and, within its limits, influences world markets. The extent of this interaction may at present be somewhat restricted, but each development in technology or industrialisation enlarges the scope of its participation.

One important effect of this introduction to the world market is that new needs are inspired and new demands fostered. The luxury becomes a necessity. Dissatisfaction with the goods one possesses and a desire to replace them are encouraged. Consumption becomes associated with social recognition/

recognition. What effect has this on the status system?

Status v. Achievement

Traditionally, ascription of status is principally in terms of membership of a particular kin group and of seniority within the group.¹ The community/

¹ However, Bascom (1951, p.491) points out that the traditional social system is complex and highly stratified: the status of an individual depends upon a series of factors including personality, capabilities, wealth, sex, relative age, the status of his lineage, the political or religious office which he achieves or inherits and the social position of his relatives, friends and associates. The importance of individual achievement in traditional Yoruba values must not be under-rated. To a certain extent it was given institutional recognition by the award of certain titles. For example, Are-ona Kakanfo was the title granted by the Alafin of Oyo to his most successfully militant war-lord (cf. Biobaku, 1957, p.12). Johnson (1921, p.78) notes that in the olden days titles were obtained by competition and he laments (op. cit. p.309) that they were not always given to the most worthy but to the highest bidder. Even the invidious distinction of sex paled before success. Johnson (op. cit. p.393) mentions Madam Efusetan, a very rich woman who lived in the nineteenth century. It is estimated that she owned 2,000 slaves. She also had her own standing army. She was given the title of iyalode, a title bestowed upon the most distinguished lady of a town, who then has a voice in the king's council and by whom the women may be represented (cf. Johnson, 1921, p.77). Madam Tinubu was another outstanding woman, a leading middleman in the interior trade in the middle of the nineteenth century. She was the niece of Akitoye and was involved in much of the intrigue surrounding him. She was given the title, Iyalode of the Egba, on account of her relief activities near Aro Gate, Abeokuta, during the second Dahomean invasion in 1864 (Biobaku, 1957, p.86).

community is economically fairly homogeneous, any disparity being of small degree. An oba or chief may possess a larger share of the resources of the community by virtue of certain economic privileges associated with his status. On the other hand he incurs greater expenses because of his wider obligations which necessitate a relatively large outlay on his part. In general, it may be said that in the traditional system wealth is a perquisite of status and that, with a subsistence economy, relatively slight surpluses involve little economic differentiation.

The advent of a cash economy has separated wealth and traditional status. The cultivation of cocoa has led directly or indirectly to the emergence of new social categories, the absentee farmer, the rentier, the entrepreneur, the professional man on the one hand; the labourer, the artisan, the clerk on the other. In these new categories it may seem that we see the naissance of a class structure of bourgeoisie and proletariat. Its emergence is, however, postponed by the enduring strength of kinship solidarity and the tenacity of kinship obligations. A man, whatever his status, finds it difficult to dissociate himself from kinsfolk and, in fact, it is proverbially recognised/

recognised that the prosperous man is the one with most relatives.

The members of the new middle classes have acquired prestige by virtue of their achievements. Their success is most easily gauged in terms of money. Wealth becomes valued as a means of entering the new elite.¹ Appreciation of money as an index of prestige is quite explicit. The "£" symbol appears again and again as an embellishment on cloth, jewelry and houses. As wealth is now one of the most important ways of gaining social approval, the satisfaction afforded by its display is a paramount factor in determining forms of expenditure. Thorstein Veblen pointed out many years ago that in such a social situation as exists now with the Yoruba a man needs certain visible signs of wealth to establish his position, since social contacts become relatively ephemeral and impersonal and status derived from birth or age counts for little. In short, a prime incentive to increase income is to increase personal prestige, largely by the purchase and display of goods. The long/

¹ This group is small in number, but its influence is considerable. Apart from its standard-setting function, it has furnished the material for the powerful political elite.

long car, the storey-house, the refrigerator, the cloth and the gold are for real but also for what Veblen calls conspicuous consumption. The desire to educate one's children may be regarded as a factor modifying this pattern, but even education is regarded in an objective way both as a proof of affluence and as a means of ensuring that of one's children. The traditional virtues of lavish hospitality and large-scale festivities (cf. Bascom, 1951, p.497) continue to operate within the new context both to enhance prestige and to lay up stores of future good-will.

The traditional status system has not, however, been completely displaced, although its role is changing. Prestige attaches to achievement. The traditional system becomes an ancillary esteem system and one which is not despised by the new élite, many of whom eagerly seek the traditional symbol of prestige and authority, the chiefly title.

Economic Changes and Kinship Organisation

The substitution of a cash economy for a subsistence economy has had a number of consequences. Two kinds of changes may be distinguished: those accompanying the breaking down of the traditional kin-group/

kin-group and those occurring within the domestic group.

The effect of the introduction of monetary incentives has been the commutation of personal services and obligations into cash form. Money has become the standard of value and the medium of exchange. At the same time, the occupational opportunities enable many members of the lineage to leave their traditional activities to work for cash in the service of strangers. This involves a marked loss of personnel for the kinship group. A young man or woman may now earn money far in advance of what might be available under traditional circumstances and, what is more, he or she earns it quite independently of father or lineage group. As their seniority goes neither with economic power nor superior knowledge the traditional authority of the elders is diminished. In other words, the individual is no longer bound to his kin-group by economic dependence, but may place himself outside the effective range of traditional controls. The close interdependence of the lineage is broken and its coherence as an economic unit is impaired. The interests of the individual are no longer those of the lineage and he identifies himself not by kinship affiliation but/

but by occupational and other considerations. Voluntary association takes the place of lineage-defined groupings (cf. Little, 1957b).

However, two factors have contributed to maintain lineage solidarity in the face of the heavy pressure to which it is subjected. In the first place, Yoruba labour is still relatively immobile. A man tends to remain in the town where he was born and when work takes him away he will in nearly all cases return. If he becomes rich he will build a house in his home town. While he is away he will belong to the association of fellow-townsmen and in this way exercise influence on the affairs of the town. Secondly, the permanence of traditional housing patterns leads to stability. People live on compound land although they may erect individual modern-style houses reflecting their economic achievement (cf. Lloyd, 1953b).

The growing individualisation of interests which the new economy encourages is reflected in the internal changes occurring in the domestic group. Although this group has always been the principal unit of production and consumption, it has been emphasised above that ultimate control of primary resources is traditionally/

traditionally vested in the lineage as a corporation. Now the domestic group may become completely independent of the lineage. Members of the domestic group share a common basis of economic support in the form of cash income. This income is not, however, derived from the co-operative efforts of the group as a unit as is traditionally the case. The principal source of income lies in the remuneration of the occupational roles performed by the members of the group. The status associated with the occupational role is generally specifically separated from kinship status, that is, a man or woman holds a job as an individual, not by virtue of status in a kinship-group. In the modern occupational system, status once achieved is contingent upon continuing performance. This is the antithesis of the traditional system where work is performed in the context of the kinship unit.

Next it is important to remember that in many cases the primary responsibility for economic support rests on the husband. His occupational status becomes the most important single basis of status of the domestic group within the community at large and the income he earns is usually the most important basis of the group's/

group's standard of living. The number of married women employed in all sectors of the occupational structure must not, however, be overlooked, although the role of housewife is still the predominant one. In the traditional system in general a woman's occupation tends to be of a qualitatively different type and it is not of a status which seriously competes with that of husband as primary status-giver and income-earner. In the modern system the husband's job tends to be higher than the wife's in status and income. If, however, both husband and wife have occupational roles which are each of determinate significance for the status of the domestic group as a whole, this can introduce an important source of strain into the marriage relationship in respect of the accepted patterning of sex roles. In other words, while there are many factors promoting the strengthening of the conjugal bond, competition between husband and wife in the sphere of occupational status may be extremely disruptive.

Polygamy ceases to offer economic advantages where subsistence cultivation has given place to wage-labour. In the new monetary economy needs are met by cash payments from the earnings of those capable of earning. Wives become/

liabilities rather than complementary partners in production. The same is true of children. Not only are they no longer welcome additions to the labour potential of the domestic group; some of the heaviest charges on the domestic economy are incurred by children. The increase in education, for example, and the cost and maintenance it entails, are powerful factors limiting family size, thus opposing the old desire to have as many children as possible. Many young men and women explicitly state that they do not wish to have large families, but would prefer three or four children whom they can afford to educate suitably.

To sum up, modern conditions imply a complex economic system which in its turn implies occupational specialisation. The lineage loses its economic function. At the same time, social status becomes geared to achievement within the new economic system and is no longer contingent upon status within the lineage group.

CHAPTER 2 THE KINSHIP SYSTEM

Kinship Terminology

The Language

Kinship Categories

PART III THE TRADITIONAL SYSTEM OF KINSHIP
AND MARRIAGE

Marriage

Marriage

The Status of a Woman

The Community

SECTION 9. THE KINSHIP SYSTEM

Yoruba Kinship Terminology

The Lineage

Kinship Groupings

The Patrilineage

Associated Lineages

Affines

Co-spouses

The Status of a Wife within the Compound

In Part II I examined the structural interdependence of the kinship system with certain other systems in the traditional structure of Yoruba society and showed how social changes have led to a separation of the latter systems from their close articulation with the kinship structure. This, it was postulated, may be regarded as a restructuring of social action whereby functions previously performed by the lineage become institutionally specialised within the new context. Reference was briefly made of a similar tendency towards functional specialisation in the system of kinship and marriage and I suggested that as the kinship system is "the most sensitive indicator of the changes now taking place"¹ this aspect of the problem would receive greater consideration. In Part III, therefore, the traditional system of kinship and marriage will be considered and Part IV will comprise an account of modern trends and an analysis of the nascent system.

Yoruba Kinship Terminology

It can perhaps be regarded as established that analysis of kinship terminology may serve as/

¹ Quoted by Meran McCulloch (1956, p.210) from Fortes.

as a highly useful approach to a study of the structure and functioning of the kinship system. Yoruba terminology may be called classificatory, that is, kinsfolk are grouped together into socially significant categories or classes rather than described by terms denoting exact genealogical connection. Morgan, who first made the distinction between descriptive and classificatory terminologies, took as the criterion of the latter the application to certain collateral relatives of terms applying primarily to lineal relatives. Radcliffe-Brown (1950, p.9) points out that the "general rule is that the inclusion of two relatives in the same terminological category implies that there is some significant similarity in the customary behaviour due to both of them or in the social relation in which one stands to each of them". It is necessary to make some distinction between near and distant relatives included in the same category, but, as Sir Henry Maine (1875, p.214) wrote, "The effect of the system is in general to bring within your mental grasp a much greater number of your kindred than is possible under the system to which we are accustomed." The importance of this in terms of rights and obligations will, it is hoped, emerge/

emerge later.

All kinsmen of the father's generation are called baba, father: all kinswomen iya, mother.¹ Any kinsman of the second ascendant generation is called by the term for grandfather. This varies. It may be simply father's father, baba baba. Among the Egba the term used is baba agba: the Oyo use the term baba nla. Similarly, a grandmother, or any kinswoman of her generation may be called iya iya, iya agba by the Egba or iya nla among the Oyo. All members of the first descendant generation are children, omo: of the second generation omo omo. Within one's own generation any elder person, irrespective of sex, is egbon: any younger collateral is aburo. In the same way a distinction may be made between father's elder sibling and younger sibling, egbon baba mi and aburo baba mi. (Cf. Lloyd, 1955a, p.241.)

An affinal relative is ana. A wife calls any member of her husband's lineage by the word for husband, oko, or by a derivative of it. Her husband and any member of the lineage junior to her husband but born before her marriage is called/

¹ For this description of the terminology cf. Forde, 1951, pp. 13-15.

called oko. Any male lineage member senior to her husband is babako: any female lineage member senior to her husband iyako. To the husband and to all members of the husband's lineage born before the marriage his wife is iyawo: to those born after the marriage iyale. (Cf. Bascom, 1942, p.42.)

Amongst wives, the terms used are a-reciprocal. Relative seniority depends on the date of marriage: a wife is senior if she was married earlier. A junior wife will call a senior wife iyale: a senior will address the junior as iyawo. It should be noted that this applies not only to the wives of one man, but amongst all the wives of all lineage members.

Certain groupings have distinctive terms of reference. The term ebi means "one born with" and is applied to one's agnatic kin (cf. Schwab, 1955, p.369). Idile is applied to the exogamous patrilocal unit connected with the/

the agnatic descent group.¹ Omo iya comprise the children of the same mother and father. Orogun is the term for wives of the same man. The arota is the group of otherwise unrelated men who are married to women of the same lineage. A further distinction is made between omo'le, children of the compound, that is, members of the patrilineage, and iya'le, wives of lineage members.

Examination of the Yoruba terminology shows that it may be considered in terms of four fundamental organisational features. In the first place there are few distinctions between terms of reference and terms of address, or according to the sex of the speaker. Secondly, the emphasis in the terminology is on seniority. Among/

¹ Ajisafe (1924, p.1) suggests, however, that idile comprises ebi together with mother's kin, yekan (literally, one mother). Father's patrikin he calls obakan (literally, one father). Lloyd (1955a, p.240) and Schwab (1955, p.352) corroborate my interpretation of idile as the patrilineage. Bascom (1942) also defines idile as patrilineage. According to Schwab (op. cit., p.370) ibatan is applied to the cognatic relationship. Isoko is the term used for the patrilineal descendants of a common ancestor of the third or fourth ascendant generation. Origun is a segment whose members are descended from a single wife of a patrilineal ancestor. I did not find these three terms in use among my informants in Abeokuta.

Among collaterals the sole distinction is made not by sex but by order of birth.¹ Similarly among the lineage wives comparative length of marriage is what is significant.² Johnson (1921, p.612) points out that deference and respect to age and status is a marked characteristic of the Yoruba. Behaviour is regulated strictly according to seniority.

In the third place, one of the basic principles which the kinship terminology reveals is/

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- ¹ If it is necessary to specify what is the sex of the persons to whom reference is made, descriptive adjectives are added e.g. egbon obinrin - elder sister or, rather, senior female sibling.
- ² In addressing a person senior, it is most important that the personal name is never used. Three devices are used to overcome this prohibition. Firstly, as has been pointed out above, different terms for reference and address are rare. When addressing a senior it is quite permissible to use the classificatory term e.g. egbon mi - my senior sibling. Or the use of teknonymy may get round the difficulty. For example, a parent may be addressed in terms of his eldest child, baba Bisi - father of Bisi. The third device occurs usually in the case of wives who are junior in terms of compound organisation to a young child and who will address it by some nickname. This is perhaps the place to note that kinship terms are often extended to unrelated individuals to whom one wishes to show respect. An elder and highly respected man may be addressed as baba mi: an aged woman as my mother, iya mi, ma mi or as aunti.

is that of equivalence of members of the same generation. While within the generation group there is an internal ordering in terms of birth order and of the distinction between full and half siblings, to someone outside the group, members constitute a unity. Thus a relationship with a particular person becomes a relationship with the person's generation group as a social unit.

A corollary of the principle of generation equivalence and the emphasis on seniority is the asymmetrical relationship of superordination and subordination between proximate generations. This relation of social inequality necessitates the maintenance of attitudes of respect on the one hand, authority on the other.

The fourth salient feature of the terminology is the bilateral extension of many terms to apply equally to maternal and paternal kin. There is a bilateral segmentation of kin into a series of successive levels which correspond to generation depth. However, in any system the extent of social recognition accorded to differing degrees of kinsfolk must be limited. This is especially the case in those societies where the primary unit of the kinship structure is also the basis of other organisation - economic, religious or/

or political. Recognition is therefore usually given to a single line of descent. Since among the Yoruba the dominant principle of descent is patrilineal¹ the integrating principle is the agnatic descent group.²

The Lineage

The lineage may be regarded as the group of greatest structural significance. Ideally it is a corporate body comprising all members living/

¹ All writers agree that descent is patrilineal, except Ajisafe (1924) who claims on p.2 that relationship is reckoned through females. However, on p.15 he states that the Yoruba are patrilineal.

² Cf. Lloyd (1955a, pp.240-1) "there is never any confusion over the two ways in which a man regards his position in the social structure: firstly, as a lineage member descended in the male line from the lineage founder and entitled to inherit moveable property, land, and titles belonging to lineage members as a group; secondly, as an individual descended from parents and grandparents belonging to other lineages, forming a corporate group only in relation to himself and from whom he has no rights to inheritance (except in so far as they are members of his own lineage) but whose aid he may ultimately seek in certain situations." While I cannot accept Lloyd's use of the term corporate above, the distinction emerges clearly between the lineage as a structural group and the bilateral group of kin which has social reality only with reference to ego. The latter is not a corporate group if one follows Maine's use of the term corporation whereby the main principal attribute was perpetuity and independence of the life of the institution from that of its personnel.

living, dead and unbegotten. Living members should remain together, living and working as a group. In fact, fission is always taking place, groups often breaking up on the death of the most senior man. Segmentation is a continuous process set in motion by a tendency towards equilibrium, and it is closely associated with generation depth. At each level of segmentation the inclusive group comprises all those who are - or believe themselves to be - the descendants of a common ancestor.

At the level of the domestic group, the death of the head may herald the economic independence of his sons or of his junior brothers. This division is always spoken of in terms of half-siblings, children of different mothers: full siblings, omo iya, are supposed to be too completely identified to permit of division, and, in practice, it is full brothers who often continue to live and work together. Such a break-up in a domestic group in the historical or legendary past, may be the basis of a higher level of segmentation, even to the division of the lineage into two major segments. The co-existence of all the segments may become impossible, perhaps because of pressure of space or resources, titleship disputes and so on. One of the segments may move away to establish a new compound. This may be built adjacent to/

to the original compound and on lineage land. In this case the relationship between the two segments will remain clear and the new compound will still be part of the lineage organisation and subject to lineage authority. If the pioneer segment wishes to move to another part of the town, the appropriate ward-heads (olori ojogbon) must be consulted and their permission obtained. In time, links with the original compound may well become so attenuated that, while it is recognised that there is some sort of kinship tie between them, there are few operative bonds of rights and obligations.¹

But the lineage is not in a perpetual state of ramification. At intermediate levels of segmentation fusion often occurs, particularly when matters involving succession to titles arise. Although a title should be bestowed upon the most senior and able man available there may be more than one eligible candidate. In addition, it is not thought desirable that lineage property and titles should be confined to one small section of the lineage: they should be assigned to different segments in order to avoid the concentration of the concomitant perquisites and prerogatives/

¹ Lloyd (1955a, p.247) suggests that this recognition of relationship with the inability to trace definite connections might be termed "clanship ties".

prerogatives. In the selection of a compound head the candidate advanced by a larger segment has more chance of success than that of a smaller segment. In such cases, two or more small segments may coalesce to form a group of comparable strength.

Segmentation of the lineage, then, is a process of fission and fusion. It operates as a means of balancing and counterbalancing and serves to prevent the superordination of any single segment at the expense of the others. It is one of two processes which maintain the lineage as a compact unit. The other process preventing the proliferation of the lineage to unmanageable proportions is that of genealogical adjustment. Certain omissions and simplifications in actual genealogies result in the lineage founder being placed only five generations or so back and this "reduces the genealogical distance between members" (cf. Lloyd, 1955a, p.251).

Lineage affiliation is determined mainly by birth. This is symbolised by the burial of the placenta by the father in his lineage compound under a gutter where running water may flow over it. At the naming ceremony which is held seven to nine days after birth, the child is formally welcomed to the lineage, is given its name and is publicly received by its father and other members of the lineage. The essential/

essential function of this ceremony is the recognition of the child's membership of the lineage and its importance in this respect must not be underestimated (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.158). While agnatic relationship is without doubt the main determinant of lineage affiliation, other factors must be recognised. Among them, as a later discussion of the significance of idanan or bride-wealth will demonstrate, is the legalisation of the union by which the man obtains rights in genetricem over the woman (cf. Bohannan, 1949). In other words, the man, by virtue of these rights, becomes the pater of any issue of the woman, no matter if he is the genitor or not. A cognate factor is the genitor's acceptance or repudiation of the role of pater to the child. The naming ceremony is the rite which marks this acceptance.

From this it may be seen that, while lineage affiliation is normally determined by rules of descent, this is not invariably the case. There are three different situations in which the child may become a member of a lineage which is not that of his genitor's. In the first place if an unmarried woman has a child which the genitor denies, the child will become a member of his mother's lineage and his mother's father assumes the role of pater. Secondly, it is not unknown for a child to adopt his mother's lineage as his/

his own if this lineage is richer, more powerful or of higher status than that of his father. In both these cases, it should be noted, the patrilineal principle remains dominant, although because of the exigencies of the situation it is the mother's patrilineage which is adopted. Finally, third, if a married woman commits adultery and there is issue of this adulterous union the child is nonetheless the social child of the woman's husband. Among the Yoruba, therefore, there is in the traditional system no illegitimate children in the sense that a child has no legal affiliation to any group. A Yoruba child will always be assimilated into a lineage group by virtue of the legal rights possessed by the group over the procreative services of the mother. The lack of a word for bastard in the language is significant. The nearest approach to the concept is the term omo ale, meaning the issue of an adulterous union.

During the first few days of life the child receives facial marks or scars. Nowadays these tend to be associated with the child's home town, but formerly important lineages had distinctive markings. Among the Ekiti, in addition to the lineage name and markings, a child is said also to become subject to so-called totemic proscriptions (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.132).

Although/

Although consanguinity, preferably paternal, is theoretically the only passport to lineage membership and although it is said that there is no other recognised way of becoming a member of a lineage, it has been suggested that strangers or freed slaves were sometimes adopted as permanent members of the group. Their descendants may have become incorporated into the lineage to a greater or lesser degree. Where assimilation is complete there will now be no distinction among the lineage members. Where, however, assimilation has not gone so far, there will be some differentiation. Lloyd (1955a, p.241) gives an example where certain sections of a lineage are tacitly debarred from holding the lineage title and he suggests that this may be because of their extra-group origin.

Each lineage has its own attributes. Symbols of membership of a lineage comprise face-marks, lineage names (orile), lineage songs (oriki) and specific taboos. A lineage may have associated with it a particular god whose altar stands in the compound. Lineage myths are the official lineage history and provide a charter for the existence of the lineage and its rights to land and titles (cf. Lloyd, 1955a, p.239. Lloyd, n.d.).

Before a critical examination of the traditional system of kinship and marriage in terms of/

of person-to-person relations it might be useful to reiterate the inter-relation of the lineage as part of the kinship system with other systems in the total structure. To summarise, then, the basic structural unit of the traditional Yoruba system is the corporate patrilineal descent group. This group is based theoretically on demonstrated descent but in fact it often happens that the kinship connection is a stipulated one. Internally it is undifferentiated, that is, access to resources is theoretically enjoyed equally by adult members of the same sex. The lineage is the land-holding unit, that is, it is the basis of traditional economic organisation. It is also the prime unit of political representation within the town. Bascom (1951, pp. 497-8) suggests that within the context of the total social structure there was traditionally a system of ranking of lineages. Lloyd (1955a, p.250n), however, has found no evidence of such ranking in the towns he visited.

Kinship Groupings

It has already been noted that the individual has contact with a wide body of kin who, in classificatory terms, tend to be regarded/

regarded as categories determined by stratifying criteria of generation and seniority. This is indicative of the fundamental bilateralism which underlies all kinship systems: biologically a child has two parents. An individual has, however, closer and more frequent contacts with certain groups of kinsfolk than with others, and this bias is intimately associated with the rules governing descent and marriage. The Yoruba favour patrilineal descent and patrilocal marriage. Because of this, the contacts of an individual with his paternal kin will be greater than with his maternal kin. The elementary fact that his father also has two parents and that it is with his father's father that he lives defines a situation in which an individual's primary, closest and most frequent contacts are with his agnatic kin. Thus out of a generalised group of consanguineous kin one segment emerges as salient with others progressively farther off in terms of contacts and structural distance.¹ It has been seen that this segmentation of the kin group into lineage groups is indicated in the terminology.²

To/

¹ Cf. Evans-Pritchard, 1940, Chap. 3, for a discussion of the concept of structural distance.

² Cf. ebi cognates : idile patrilineage :
omo iya sibling group.

To get a clearer conception of the more specific institutional structure of the system of kinship and marriage, it is useful to turn to a different order of evidence - a consideration of the relationships of the individual with members of the groups of cognates and affines with whom he has contact, and an examination of the rights and duties which mediate those relationships.

The individual comes into contact with six social categories. He may participate in the activities of these categories as a member, full or to a limited degree: or he may be excluded from membership and be related to the group by a negative bond as in the relationship with spouse's kindred. The four cognatic categories are:-

1. His own lineage, that is, his father's lineage.
2. His mother's lineage, that is, his mother's father's lineage.
3. His father's mother's lineage, that is, his father's mother's father's lineage.
4. His mother's mother's lineage, that is, his mother's mother's father's lineage.

Marriage brings this individual into more or less formal contact with two other social groupings.

5. Kindred of spouse

and

6. Those of the same sex whose relationship with the kindred of the spouse is of the same nature/

nature as the individual's, that is, for a man, those men who are married to women of the same lineage, and, for a woman, those women who are married to men of the same lineage.

It will be noticed that both men and woman have potentially the same types of social relationships. The dominance of the agnatic principle again modifies a generalised situation into one in which behaviour is influenced by residence and proximity.

The Patrilineage

Within his own lineage an individual, male or female, has full rights of membership. Any male member has full rights to office, providing he is sufficiently senior and possesses qualities of leadership and esteem. He has full access to economic resources and it is the duty of the bale to give assistance, financial or otherwise, to any needy member of the lineage. Similarly, if an individual is in debt or has to pay a fine he may expect lineage co-members to contribute. On the other hand, each member has a reciprocal obligation to assist fellow members. The unity of the lineage and the corporate responsibility of the lineage for the deeds of individual members is demonstrated in two ways. In the first place, an impatient creditor could formerly extort repayment of his money by setting bailiffs on/

on to the lineage members, instead of the defaulting debtor (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.712). Secondly, if an individual commits some indiscretion or tort involving non-lineage members, the matter must be settled through the bale as representative of the individual's lineage. Another example of the role of the lineage as a corporate entity taking precedence over the interests of the individual members is in the former practice of arranged marriages.

Marriage, although patrilocal, does not sever a woman's connection with her own lineage. She remains a member although the fact that she lives elsewhere causes a weakening of contacts. Nevertheless her lineage still retains certain rights in reserve over her, to be exercised in the last resort against her husband. A husband is legally liable for the debts of his wife. His duty to assist in the payment of his wife's father's debts may be regarded as an extension of the daughter's duty to assist, now assumed by the husband. The wife's religious duties still lie with her natal lineage gods.

At the same time the woman retains certain rights in respect of lineage property and lineage affairs. Although succession and descent are in general strictly patrilineal, very occasionally landed property may be inherited and succession to offices arranged/

arranged in terms of relationship through the mother. But this inheritance and succession is only in so far as the mother's rights are through patrilineal relationship.¹

A woman, if she may not inherit land - to which the lineage always retains reversionary rights - may inherit usufructory rights. A man may, therefore, be found farming land which he will say belongs to his wife or his mother. In fact, the ultimate rights of ownership are not hers.

What do these rights and obligations mean in terms of interpersonal lineage relationships? An examination of the kinship terminology has already suggested the importance of relative seniority both as between and within generations. A-reciprocal behaviour of superordination and subordination are in fact what may be observed. A junior is expected to be modest, respectful and obedient.

The intricate system of etiquette and grammatical convention reflect this attitude of respect. A junior must greet the senior first. A woman kneels: a man prostrates. Eyes must never be raised before a senior/

¹ It is of interest to note that in the Yoruba myths of tribal origin of Oranyan's seven children (i.e. Oduduwa's grandchildren) two were women whose sons were given kingly rank because of their maternal grandfather.

senior person but must remain respectfully lowered. A senior must be addressed in the third, never the second, person. He may never be addressed by his name. A junior person may never rest idle while his senior is at work. There is therefore a distinct correlation of hard and distasteful work with juniority and of ease and leisure with seniority.

But if seniority entitles one to certain advantages and prerogatives, as well as bestowing certain immunities, it also entails certain obligations. A senior must always be prepared to care for and assist his junior kinsman. It is true that a senior has the right to appropriate anything belonging to the junior person. This right is, however, rarely exercised as it would be unfitting for a senior to appear to be in such a position that he possesses less than his junior. (In the same way, a senior person may not benefit from the death of a junior.) On the other hand, a junior kinsman may borrow or remove any article belonging to the senior (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.922). He may call upon the latter for assistance, and as long as his request is reasonable he will never be refused. To a large extent the senior is at a disadvantage. As the superior in status it would be undignified for him to demand the return of the borrowed article or repayment of the loan.

Any/

Associated
Any senior has a dominant role vis-a-vis a junior. However, as far as the individual is concerned, his father is the person with whom there are most immediate and closest contacts. It is the father who has the most authoritative role. A child's complete obedience and conformity to the dictates of the father are socially approved. Any deviation or any assumption of individual responsibility may be regarded as an act of rebellion. This state of affairs does not alter with the passage of time, although, in the case of a woman, transfer to her husband's compound on marriage results in a relaxation of parental control. In the case of a man, the stringencies of filial duty still operate, however old he may be, unless he has been exonerated from them by the father himself.

By the time a man is a grandparent or a great-grandparent he is treated with the greatest respect. He is, in fact, on the threshold of the ancestors and death will mark his passage across to divine status. Not only that. Survival to a ripe old age means that the individual is now in control of the group's resources of property, knowledge and religious power. He is also endowed by virtue of his seniority with high political authority. He is thus in a position of power, with sanctions of a religious, political and economic nature at his command.

Associated/

Associated Lineages

Because of the fact that the family of procreation is not an independent unit but is a segment of a larger patrilocal kinship unit, the most easily identifiable kinship grouping is the patrilineal one. Membership of other groups has less significance since the occasions of contact are fewer and poorer in content. Although the paternal lineage is the group of primary importance, and although the functions of the peripheral kinship groups are in general limited to an expression of common interest and kinship solidarity on occasions of naming, marriage or burial ceremonies, nevertheless an individual considers himself to have some kind of qualified membership or association with these groups.

Of the three other lineages to which the individual is related through his grandparents, the one with which he has most in common is that of his mother's father. If he is not a member of this lineage he has certain rights there, and if these rights are partial and secondary, they may be of great social and political importance (cf. Schwab, 1955, pp. 354, 371, 372). It has already been noted that under certain circumstances, for example, in cases where there are no suitable patrilineal candidates, a man may succeed to a title or inherit property within his mother's lineage. He may also have the right to use land belonging to his/

his mother's lineage although his children may not inherit the use of it.

The patrilineages of father's mother and mother's mother are of less social significance. Structurally, they are more distant and with the weakening of the bonds of common interest the relationship becomes more tenuous. These two groups are usually the limiting ones in actual recognition of effective claims of kinship. Logically, however, the proliferation of structurally increasingly distant lineages is possible, and in the rules to prevent incest, recognition of kin is carried back to the fourth ascendant generation, thus involving 16 distinct lineages (cf. Lloyd, 1955a, p.240).

Affines

So far the discussion has centred on kinship relations. Marriage not only brings a new domestic unit or conjugal group into being: it also brings the individual into contact with two new/

new groups of people.¹ The first comprises the members of the spouse's kin group. While contact with consanguines is in terms of a greater or less degree of identification, the relationship with affines is never of this kind. It must always be in terms of counter-position. By this it is not wished to imply that the relationship is one of opposition. Both man and woman are expected to treat affinal relatives with respect, especially the spouse's parents. In fact, the patrilocality of marriage makes the relationship of a wife to members of her husband's lineage much more intense than that of a man to his wife's lineage. Nevertheless, a man is expected to show deference to his affines and there is a certain constraint between them (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.457). However, where his wife's relative is very much younger than he is, seniority intervenes and results in a joking relationship/

¹ Although the discussion here primarily concerns the individual it must be reiterated that traditional Yoruba marriage is an alliance of groups. It establishes an affinal relationship between all living members of both contracting lineages. An indication of this may be seen in the terminology whereby a woman is called "wife" by all members of her husband's lineage. At the structural level of analysis this may be regarded as an assertion of the close unity of the lineage. It follows logically that if ultimate rights in a woman in uxorem are possessed by the lineage as a unitary group, then on the death of her husband these rights will remain vested in the lineage although usufructory rights, so to speak, will fall to the husband's heir.

ship between a man who is relatively of far greater seniority in terms of years and a child of senior status in terms of their structural relationship (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.316).

Marriage involves a man not only in attitudes of respect towards his affines. From the time of his betrothal he has also the added responsibility of performing certain services and undertaking certain obligations for his wife's parents. In addition to making visits with his wife to her parents (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.256), these obligations include regularly recurrent gifts of farm produce such as yam and maize (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.318). Moslems also send the leg of a ram to their father-in-law at the Moslem festival of Bairam (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.868). A son-in-law must be ready to contribute his labour in connection with such duties as building or repairing his father-in-law's house, clearing the farm or erecting a fence around his mother-in-law's chicken run (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.318). In addition, it is his duty to give gifts of goods and money to his wife's kin on special occasions such as on the death of her parents or grandparents, the wedding of her collaterals, and so on. He must also assist in whatever preparations are necessary on such occasions. In cases of the death of one of a wife's parents or grandparents/

grandparents it is the duty of the sons-in-law of the lineage to help in digging the graves and to undertake the actual burial (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.320). Finally, a son-in-law must assist his wife's father in the payment of fines and debts and he has almost unlimited liability in this respect (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.324).

It must be remembered that these gifts and duties rendered to his affines are not peculiar to this relationship alone but may be thought of rather as incidental to the close bonds analogous to those of consanguinity which exist between a man and his wife's kin.

Although a woman's relations with her affines show the same features as those of a man, marriage is much more of a crisis to a woman than a man: she has to adjust not only to living with her husband and his parents, but to a whole new tightly integrated community. She is leaving the known for the unknown: a position of relatively high status within her own lineage compound to take up a mean subservient role as junior wife. As a wife she always ranks junior to any member of the lineage born before her advent. Her behaviour must always be respectful, modest and obliging. She must fulfil all the minutiae of etiquette her low status imposes. To those much younger she must be full of affection, flattery and blandishments/

blandishments. She may not chastise even her youngest affine however much the latter may annoy or disobey her (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.278). In terms of lineage status the child is her senior. She must always work harder than any daughter of the compound, sweeping, washing, fetching water, grinding, making preparation for festivities, and so on (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.408). Her services are at the disposal of all her affines who, however, have first right over the use of any article belonging to her husband.

It is at this point in the structure that one source of strain and friction arises. A woman may not be happy about her degraded position vis-à-vis the members of her husband's lineage. Custom, however, prescribes it and a long training in respect to those older than oneself reconciles her to this subservience. But she resents the deference exacted so strictly by the younger women of the lineage at whose pleasure she must be prepared to undertake all sorts of hard, tedious or unpleasant work.

Regarded from another point of view this situation of potential conflict implies a structural bias against divorce. Life within the compound comprises a whole set of carefully balancing rights and duties set within the hierarchical framework of seniority. The fragile equilibrium is very easily disturbed/

disturbed and one of the most disruptive factors is the Yoruba wife's bête noire, the sister-in-law. As marriage is patrilocal the only adult women permanently resident in the compound should be the wives, who are organised in terms of marital seniority. However, if a woman is divorced and unless she re-marries she has nowhere else to go to except her natal compound. There, by virtue of her lineage membership, she is senior to most of the compound wives, many of whom have lived there longer than she has ever done. As this seniority not only implies attitudes and terms of respect, but also has a distinct although inverse correlation with division of work and of available resources, jealousies and tensions are easily aroused. Thus, in the traditional system, there is no place for the divorced woman. She is not welcome as a permanent member of her lineage compound and there are few opportunities for her to become economically independent.

If the wife owes her affines respect and obedience, in return they must be generous to her and provide for her in abundance, and this obligation is symbolically recognised. At functions of one sort or another, such as weddings and funerals, as the wife greets a member of the husband's lineage in the traditional manner by kneeling before him (or her), she/

she may spread a cloth at the individual's feet saying that she has not eaten well since she saw him last. The latter is expected to place a gift of money on the cloth at the same time promising to send along a cow or a sheep later. (A promise which, it is quite understood by all concerned, will never be implemented but which, it is hoped, will prove the munificence of the lineage into which she is married.)

Co-spouses

The last category of people with whom the individual is brought into contact by marriage is the group of persons of the same sex having a comparable relationship with the spouse's lineage. That is, for a man, the group of men who have the role of husband to women of his wife's lineage: for a woman, the women who are married to male members of her husband's lineage. Once again it may be seen that the relationship is potentially the same for both sexes. Again the patrilocality of marriage intervenes, to intensify a woman's contacts with her co-wives.

A man will come into contact with his arota only on occasional gatherings - working parties, weddings or marriage feasts. On the other hand, a woman has to live with her co-wives, that is, with the women who are also married to men of her husband's lineage/

lineage.

Among wives there is strict regulation of conduct according to seniority which is determined not by age, attainments or qualities, but by chronological order of marriage. This seniority is relative. Thus the first wife is always senior to the second, the second to the third, and so on. The first wife is accorded the greatest respect as being prima inter pares.

This system of seniority is reckoned not only in terms of the wives of one man but of the whole lineage group, although it is seen most clearly in the functioning unit of the smaller group. The most senior wife of the bale has very high status not only amongst the wives but in the whole compound itself. Each morning when the bale is saluted ceremonially by compound members his senior wife is also saluted (cf. Johnson, 1921, p.99. Ajisafe, 1924, p.3. Ward, 1937, p.41).

Any superordinate-subordinate alignment of roles implies a differential set of rights and duties. The division of labour amongst the wives reflects this very clearly. Work is always assigned on the basis of relative seniority. The most senior wife is the one who directs domestic activity. She does least of the tedious and arduous domestic chores and she may in fact/

fact have very few household tasks if there are a number of junior wives. The senior wife is the authority to whom disputes between junior wives are referred first for settlement and she should be the accepted channel of communication between the husband and his other wives.¹ The more junior a wife is the heavier and more disagreeable the tasks assigned to her. A young wife has a hard life. She must make no complaints; accept her lot with equanimity and perform her work with willingness; it may be seen, therefore, that in one way this system encourages the acceptance of polygyny on the part of the women. A young wife may hope to gain at least a measure of relief when her husband marries another wife.

It is the ideal that the group comprising the wives of one man forms a solidarity group with common interests. Among co-wives there should be co-operation and goodwill (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.229). On the occasion of funeral and feast they should work together in the preparations. They should appear together on gala days in "uniform".² The senior wife should ensure that/

¹ It is to the senior wife that representations are often made by neglected junior wives for access to the husband's bed (cf. Ward, 1937, p.41. Ward, 1938, p.47).

² The Yoruba are extremely association-minded people. It is usual for all the members of a group of people who have common interests - kinship, trade or recreational - to wear cloth of the same pattern on festive occasions. In English the word applied is "uniform". In Yoruba the term is aso ebi, literally family cloth.

that her group of co-wives are all finely dressed and adorned and, if necessary, lend them suitable cloth, ornaments or the money to buy these (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.230).

Yet although common interest should keep co-wives bound together, in fact this is not the case. As Talcott Parsons (1954, pp.188-9) has pointed out "conformity with the expectations of socially structured roles is not to be taken as a matter of course . . . often there are typically structured sources of psychological strain which underlie socially structured manifestations of the kind which Kardiner has called 'secondary institutions'". One such source of strain has already been noted in the relationship between a wife and her younger sister-in-law. Another arises out of the dissatisfaction of a junior wife at the allocation of work, especially in comparison with her recent favoured position as a daughter of the lineage in her natal compound. At the same time a senior wife may resent her husband's favouritism towards a younger and more attractive junior wife, for, although it is the ideal that a man treats all his wives equitably, such a satisfactory situation seldom obtains (cf. Ward, 1938, p.48).

There is, then, a situation in which each wife is subordinate to a number of senior wives and superordinate/

superordinate to any junior wives there may be. In the status-determined situation she is jealous of her rights and prerogatives and determined to protect them against the encroachments of the other wives. A wife will be jealous of her husband's favours, gifts and attentions; jealous to preserve the rights of her children; and involved in a continual struggle to get more than her co-wives from him for herself and her children. It is perhaps suggestive that the English word used by informants for a co-wife was often "rival" although "mate" was sometimes also used.

The Status of a Wife within the Compound

As has already been described, the status of a newly married woman in her husband's lineage compound is a low one. This role of subservience changes with time. Her status improves partly as a function of the succession of subsequent wives over whom she may claim seniority. The main factor in the easing of a woman's position is, however, the birth of her children. However high she may rank in the structure of the compound in terms of marital seniority, without children she is an object at least of pity if not of contempt. If she is well-loved great care is taken not to hurt her susceptibilities by any reference in her presence to this sore subject. If she is not popular she may/

may be subjected to obloquy and derision. In a short story which appeared in one of the daily newspapers a mother-in-law starts,

".....why, it is five years now since you have married my son. You have given birth to no children. All his friends who married at the same time that he married you have two to three children already. Don't you see what I mean? You can understand the truth that you are a barren woman. You are barren, you are fruitless. You are hopeless, disgustingly un-encouraging. You are to my son what a useless horse is to its owner. You are too weak to run, much more to win a race. Therefore, you have become a wife of sorrow, who constitutes the source of family unhappiness to my son, and that is why you must go now. Pack your loads and go far away, to a place where my son will never see you again, because you are no more a part of his life." (Daily Service, June 30th, 1956.)

A woman's fertility is a sanction of her status and her security for old age. By the time she is a grandmother - at which stage it is improper for her to give birth to any more children¹ - she is of senior status within the compound and enjoys a measure of authority, personal liberty and freedom of speech (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.169).

¹ Structurally, this prohibition prevents any confusion between seniority based on the principle of relative age and seniority based on generation difference.

In Section 7 I analysed the Yoruba kinship system and the material showed that the unity of the lineage is the most important

SECTION 10. MARRIAGE AND THE DOMESTIC GROUP

In this section the main subjects to be considered are

The Domestic Group

Marriage

The Legality of Native Law and Custom
Marriage

Stability of Marriage

Bridewealth

Rights in genetricem

The Husband-wife Relationship

The 2 The Mother-child Relationship

The Father-child Relationship

Siblings and Half-siblings

Co-wives

Summary

It is the primary structural principle

is that of lineage solidarity, the necessity of

marrying outside the group leads to the

as the sole determinant of local

organisation/

In Section 9 I analysed the traditional Yoruba kinship system and the material showed that the unity of the lineage is the most important structural principle underlying it. In this section the main subjects to be considered are the articulation of the lineage with the domestic group and the nature of the marital relationship within the context of the lineage type of organisation.

The Domestic Group

To recapitulate, we are dealing with two different orders of phenomena - the lineage, a structural unit, and the compound, a residential unit. If the primary structural principle is that of lineage solidarity, the necessity of marrying outside the group leads to its modification as the sole determinant of local organisation/

organisation. Since women are the mobile elements, the compound comprises not only male lineage members and unmarried female lineage members, but also wives who are themselves members of other lineages. This dichotomy within the compound between children of the compound, that is, lineage members, omo ile, and wives of the compound, iya'le, is an important one. It is clear that the patrilocality of marriage makes the position of women very different from that of men, on whom the continuity of the lineage rests and who retain throughout their life-cycle a fundamentally stable status within the compound. The sphere of most of a man's social contacts tends to coincide with the structural unit. Yet if a wife is never assimilated into her husband's lineage her membership of the compound is practically complete. She looks upon her husband's compound as her own and is not encouraged to do otherwise by her own kinsfolk. (cf. Fadipe, 1940, pp. 13, 406).

The/

The compound does not operate as a unit as far as domestic organisation is concerned: it comprises a number of groups of a man, his wife or wives and their children, with perhaps his aged parent or younger sibling. This group, which is brought into being by marriage and which functions within the wider context of the compound, we shall call the domestic group.

Marriage

As with most phenomena of universal occurrence, the manifestations of marriage are diverse. Yet certain essential elements may be distinguished and definition usually includes in one form or another the idea of a legally sanctioned and permanent union between a man and a woman, its chief ends being sexual access and procreation. Lowie, (1933, p.146), for example, in an article on marriage states that "Marriage denotes those unequivocally sanctioned unions which persist beyond sensual satisfaction and thus come to underlie family life." However, in respect of the Yoruba the word "unequivocally" raises certain difficulties. The terms oko, husband, and iyawo, wife, have less precise connotations than their English equivalents. Any woman with whom a man has habitual and/

and exclusive sexual intercourse is known as his iyawo, he as her oko, whether their union has been legalised or not. Habitual intercourse and an acknowledgement of the woman as iyawo are the most important conditions of an irregular union. Neither party has any legal rights over the other nor is the duration of the relationship at all certain, although in some cases it endures for the life-time of the participants. The birth of children is often a factor in the permanency of the union. Certain of these irregular unions, then, satisfy Lowie's criteria, that is, they may receive social acceptance, persist and form the basis of an elementary family. It would seem then that they might be regarded, in sociological terms, as fulfilling the necessary conditions of marriage. It is, however, quite explicitly appreciated that this type of union is not sanctioned by either traditional or modern law and to that extent social acceptance is qualified. At the same time an irregular union is usually closely associated with other circumstances, for example, another, legal, union of the male partner, and the position of the iyawo is not unequivocal in certain situations. For the purposes of this thesis, then, the term 'marriage' will be restricted to a legal union between a man and a woman who are then husband and wife.

The/

The Legality of Native Law and Custom Marriage

Legality is ascribed to customary marriage by virtue of a general recognition of native law and custom, and this extends to marriage by Moslem and other rites. The legal status of this kind of marriage may be inferred by that section of the Marriage Ordinance which provides that an existing native law and custom marriage is a legal impediment to a marriage contracted in terms of the Ordinance. There is however no proscription upon polygyny within the customary system itself and no limitation on the number of wives. Although, in a marriage concluded with due formality, a series of gifts and payments are made, the only one which is necessary for the marriage to be recognised as legally valid is a relatively small cash payment. The other condition for a legal union is the consent of the parents. The marriage relationship is not regarded as holy and interminable. It is the contractual nature of the union which is stressed. The possibility of terminating the relationship is not ruled out although, as has been stated, structural factors in the traditional system militate against a high rate of instability.

Stability of Marriage

To an uneducated woman living in the traditional environment life without a husband is unthinkable/

unthinkable and socially undesirable. If her marriage fails there is a structural bias against her permanent return to the paternal compound where her presence would upset the delicate balance of female statuses. She must therefore endure a joyless marriage or find a man to marry on the dissolution of the present union. In the latter case the lover, ale, must refund to the husband the bride wealth or legalisation fee. In certain places, by-laws have been passed to regularise the proceedings by fixing the sum of returnable bride-wealth and laying down the size of rebates which are allowed for length of marriage, number of children and so on. In Ibadan, for example, £12.10/- is the amount returnable for a girl if the marriage has not been consummated; where there are a number of children £6.5/- is returned.¹ In this way the sexual services and child-bearing capabilities of the woman are transferred from one man to another, due allowance being made for depreciation and services rendered.²

It is doubtful whether formerly there was any legal machinery for terminating a union (cf. Ward, 1938, p.110). It is significant, I think, that a woman never/

¹ See Appendix II for Egba and Ijebu-Ode By-laws.

² In a later section the implications of this transfer of rights over the woman from one man to another will be considered as an indication of the modern tendency towards attenuation of collective lineage rights.

never goes through the formal betrothal and wedding ceremonies a second time. This is, of course, not the case for a man. The following extract from Johnson (1921, p.116), gives some indication of the traditional position.

The following peculiarities mark Yoruba wedded life:

1. Women are never really married twice; they may be inherited as widows, or taken for a wife outside the late husband's family, but the marriage ceremony is never gone over again under any circumstances.
2. Once married they are attached for ever to the house and family of their deceased husband: hence it is more usual for widows to choose another husband from the same family.
3. No woman is without a husband, except in extreme old age, but every woman must in any case have a male protector who is responsible for her.¹
4. Divorce is very rare; so rare as to be practically considered as non-existing. It is by no means easily obtained, especially when there are children of the union. The causes that may lead to a divorce are:- Adultery with the husband's blood-relation, kleptomania, repeated insolvency, especially such as may bring trouble to the house. A woman may apply for a divorce for extreme cruelty, which can be testified to, and ill-usage. But these causes notwithstanding a divorce is never granted by the rulers of the town until all possible means of reclamation have been exhausted.
5. A woman divorced from her husband can never be married, or taken up legally by another man/

¹ Cf. also Ajisafe, 1924, p.5. "There is no spinster in the country."

man; hence the saying A ki isu opo alaye
(no one can inherit the relict of a living
man).

Whatever may have been the position in olden days, however, the situation today is very different. Dr. Lucy Mair (1953, p.124) points out that it has been observed in many parts of Africa that it is very common for marriages to break up in the first years. This is certainly so among the Yoruba. Fadipe (1940, p.972) comments on the instability of marriage and it would appear that both men and women may go through several marriages before a compatible partner is found. Deep bonds of affection and interest are then often established and maintained. I was unable to obtain any statistical information on divorce rates, but it was estimated by the appeal judge of the Native Courts at Ibadan that first marriages tend to be shorter than subsequent unions and that the first impermanent ventures vary in duration from three to seven years.

A very important part of native court proceedings is taken up by petitions for divorce.¹ Out of a sample of 420 cases all but one were instituted by women. This suggests that a man finds no necessity for/

¹ Elsewhere (Anderson, 1954, p.223) it is quoted that in Ibadan over 4,000 cases of divorce, 95% of these involving Moslems, are handled annually by the Native Courts.

for divorce.¹ It is not a pre-requisite for his re-marriage. A woman, on the other hand, must obtain her release from a legal union before she can contract a further union, the issue of which will belong to the second husband.

The following is a list of the avowed grounds for divorce in the 419 cases noted:-

3	Unhappiness
3	Misunderstanding
6	No love for defendant
5	Tired of husband
15	Disagreement
19	Cruelty
17	Ill-treatment
25	Neglect
35	Lack of maintenance support
15	Lack of adequate support, especially when nursing child
15	Neglect of wife and disrespect to her parents
15	Husband starved wife
6	Indifferent when wife sick
23	Desertion by husband
9	Failure to have issue

¹ It is of interest to note that in the reports of the court proceedings there is a difference of terminology. Women divorce their husbands: the husband is seeking not divorce but dissolution of the marriage.

- 7 Death of all children born of the union
- 3 Impotence of man
- 1 Impotence of husband by reason of old age
- 1 Man unable to consummate marriage
- 2 Man is too old (i.e. impotent)
- 1 Failure to get issue in 20 years
- 5 Woman became pregnant by another man¹
- 1 Rejection by husband following adulterous pregnancy¹
- 9 Frequent sickness of husband
- 1 Man is sickly and would not leave palm wine drinking which is the cause of his sickness, his cough
- 14 Venereal disease on part of man
- 1 Woman discovered husband a night-soil man
- 1 Failure of man to continue with the match
- 5 Both parties agree to separate
- 9 Death of husband²
- 18 Failure to pay customary fees
- 3 Woman does not want to be confined (i.e. secluded as in purdah)
- 2 Failure to confine woman according to arrangement
- 11 Different religions

¹ N.B. Woman petitioning for divorce.

² This indicates the strength of lineage solidarity. Reversionary rights over a wife are, it will be remembered, vested in the lineage and to re-marry outside the lineage the widow must obtain legal separation from the lineage as an entity.

5	Kidnapped
1	Kidnapped, wounded and spent nine months in hospital
6	Father forced girl into first marriage (<u>sara</u>)
5	Opposition of woman's parents to match
5	Opposition of man's parents to match
22	Hostility of man's mother
24	Trouble with relatives
19	Trouble caused by senior wives
6	Trouble with junior wives
20	Troubles from rivals (i.e. co-wives)
<hr/> 419	

It will be seen that the grounds for divorce fall into three principal categories: a neglect of his duties on the part of the husband, failure to have children from the union, and unsatisfactory relationships with affines.

Whatever the grounds advanced and whoever may be at fault, the disgruntled husband almost invariably regards his wife's petition for divorce as a betrayal. He shows his strong sense of personal injury by the counterpetitions which he makes against the errant wife. These petitions usually comprise vindictive claims for return of idanan, or trading capital, or accusations of theft. The following account of a case heard at Ibadan is an example of this type of action.

The/

The husband complained that his wife, who had just left him after ten years of marriage, had taken with her certain of his possessions, namely some money, six goats and a number of cloths. Replying to this accusation the woman pointed out that the motive behind it was spite on the part of the husband and his kin. It was because she had left him: he sued her immediately after appearing in the divorce court. She claimed that the money and the animals were her own property, the profit of her trading. As for the cloths, they were also her own, a gift from him to her. She did not go to her marriage naked, nor should she leave it so. She also added that she had no children and four other co-wives. The court upheld her, commenting that such malice is common and that her barrenness should not be a reason for humiliating her.

Bride-wealth.

A necessary condition for the legal termination of a native law and custom marriage is the return of the idanan. Among the Yoruba, in contrast to the position among certain neighbouring tribes such as the Ibo, the bride-wealth is itself not of great value, although the accompanying expenses incurred in getting a wife may be high. The legal implications of the bride-wealth are however of great importance. The functions of the bride-wealth/

bride-wealth have been discussed, inter alia, by Radcliffe-Brown (1950,p.46f), Phillips (1953,p.xiv), Schneider (1953) and Gluckman (1953) and may be summarised as:

1. a symbol of the marriage contract and a sign of the validity of the union.
2. protection of the wife.
3. inducement to economic enterprise
4. a factor in the maintenance of the marriage
5. a symbol of the alliance between two kin-groups
6. legitimisation of the children
7. compensation for the transfer of rights in rem and in personam and for the loss of the services of the woman
8. compensation for the loss to the woman's group in terms of the breach in family solidarity.

As far as the Yoruba are concerned it would seem that the relatively slight value of the idanan would make the symbolic aspect of its transfer of more social significance than any economic aspect. Thus, to consider it as an economic incentive, a financial deterrent to instability, or a compensation for loss would, I believe, be unrealistic. It is symbolic/

symbolic of the ratification of a contract of marriage between members of two hitherto unrelated kin groups and a validation of the union. It does not itself establish the relationship. This is the function of the ijohun or first formal engagement ceremony, when the young man obtains rights in rem in respect of his fiancée to the exclusion of others. However, he does not thereby obtain rights in personam.¹ These are established by the idanan (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.331). Thus although it is not permissible for him to have sexual intercourse with her himself before the idanan ceremony, he may sue in the courts for compensation from any man who infringes the exclusive rights to her sexual services established by the ijohun (cf. Ajisafe, 1924, p.55)²

The idanan signifies the final transfer of rights over the woman from her own lineage to that of her husband. What do these rights comprise and what/

¹ V. Radcliffe-Brown, 1952, pp.32-33. "Rights may be classified as of three main kinds:
(a) Rights over a person imposing some duty or duties upon that person. This is the jus in personam of Roman law. A father may exercise such rights over his son, or a nation over its citizens.
(b) Rights over a person 'as against the world'; i.e. imposing duties on all other persons in respect of that particular person. This is the jus in rem of Roman law in relation to persons.
(c) Rights over a thing, i.e. some object other than a person, as against the world, imposing duties on other persons in relation to that thing".

² Before payment of ijohen the father has the right to sue a seducer for damages to his daughter! In Ibadan the usual penalty is a fine of £5 and £2. 10. 0d compensation to parents or 3 months imprisonment with hard labour.

what do the concomitant obligations entail? As we have seen, the husband has complete and exclusive rights over her sexual services and to the issue. He also has the right to her economic and domestic co-operation, but he does not have the right to claim any of her personal or real property or her earnings. The husband's right to chastise his wife for disobedience or adultery is recognised(cf. Ajisafe, 1924, p.62. Ward, 1938, pp.84-5): the right is, however, limited and he may not abuse it by wounding her grievously or by killing her. If he exceeds his rights in this respect the wife's lineage may intervene to demand retribution(cf. Ward, 1938, p.84).

To a man marriage brings a host of fresh responsibilities. Not only is he still at the command of his own father for any specific service the latter may require of him. He has also the duties to his wife's kin which have been described in Section 9. Above all that he must now undertake the care of his wife and children (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.165). It is his duty to maintain her, that is to house, feed and clothe her; to look after and protect her; to co-habit with her and provide her with children; to provide her with the capital for trading; to respect her property; to care for her in illness and old age and/

and to bury her decently in his own house (cf. Ward, 1938, pp.57-62. Fadipe, 1940, pp.199-200). He is answerable for her conduct and must bear legal responsibility for any debts she may contract, for any litigation in which she may be involved or for any trouble with the political authorities (cf. Fadipe, 1940, pp.191,195,199).

The rights and obligations of husband and wife in each other are not symmetrical. It has been shown that a man has exclusive sexual rights over his wife, whereas a woman has no rights to the sexual monopoly of her husband. The latter may take additional wives or commit adultery and she has no ground in native law and custom for complaint unless at the same time he neglects her. If he does this, or fails to fulfil any of the customary duties, she may call in her kinsfolk or, if all else fails, appeal to the local ruler (cf. Ellis, 1894, p.187).

Rights in Genetricem

Laura Bohannon (1949) has made the distinction between rights in uxorem and rights in genetricem, that is, between rights in a woman as a wife and rights in a woman as a child-bearer. One of the most important aspects of Yoruba marriage is/

is procreation, and the transfer of rights in genetricem is symbolised by the giving of idanan. This establishes the paternity of all children borne by the woman. The man who pays idanan becomes pater of all her issue no matter who the genitor may be. Even in cases where a woman has left her husband and co-habited with another man for many years, if the idanan has not been returned to the legal husband, he is the pater of all the children of the illegal union. (cf. Ward, 1938, p.144).

One result of these absolute rights in genetricem is that in cases of divorce no distinctions are made between guilty and not guilty. Children are always awarded to the husband. However, if a child is an infant the mother is given custody until the child is about five years old when it returns to the divorced husband. During the period while the child is with the mother, the man pays her an allowance, ibonbo. In Ibadan this is usually about 10/- per year. This fee appears to signify the rights as pater which the man possesses and retains¹. Many cases involving paternity disputes come before the native courts, usually because the woman has conceived for a lover before getting a divorce, that is, before refund of idanan. The following is a typical case/

1. Although the father has the pre-emptive rights in respect of a child, a divorced wife also retains some rights as mater. This is demonstrated in the case of the engagement of daughters. The mother's share of the customary fees must be given to her.

case.

The plaintiff pleaded that he was "owner of a three and a half months' pregnancy". His ex-wife had three children all of whom died. She divorced the husband. The judgement given was that before divorce proceedings were instituted she was two months pregnant and still married to the plaintiff. Therefore Yoruba law and custom on this point is that the plaintiff is the "owner of the pregnancy". It does not matter who impregnated the defendant.

The Husband-wife Relationship.

Hitherto the jural aspect of marriage has been under discussion. The next subject will be the personal aspect, that is, the dyadic relationships which obtain in the domestic group brought into being by marriage. The primary relationship in the sense that it is the first necessary one is that of husband and wife. It will, however, be seen that the primacy of the relationship in terms of common interest or of sentiment is open to question.

The ideal husband is kind and just. He should carry out his obligations towards his wives equitably and generously. The prime requisites of a wife are industry and submissiveness, fidelity and fertility. All four qualities are important, but the last sets the seal on a marriage. Pregnancy should be established within the first year of the union if it is to be a happy or stable one.

The corollary of the wife's respect and obedience/

obedience towards her husband is his authoritative attitude. He tends to be somewhat aloof in his manner and contacts between them tend to be of a formal nature. Their relationship lacks any idea of companionship, either in leisure or at work. There is little public mixing of the sexes (cf. Ward, 1937, p.6) and a wife has, in fact, little leisure time to spend with her husband, even if he should desire her company (cf. Johnson, 1921, p.125). Their work is generally in quite separate spheres and while the division of labour is complementary - the man working on the farm, the woman assisting in the harvesting and processing the farm produce, as well as working in the home - there is little feeling of shared labour. The husband-wife relationship, instead of being a complementary partnership in a joint project, has been resolved into a dualism of male and female rights and statuses. Perhaps because of the primacy of allegiance towards one's lineage group rather than towards one's spouse, there appears to be a latent hostility and divergence of interest between the couple (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.756). In the traditional environment where there is so little diversification of opportunity this tends to remain below the surface. In addition, one must not underestimate the measure of genuine attachment which often grows up between husband and wife, especially/

especially if she is the senior wife.

A man's senior wife often has a wide knowledge of his affairs and acts as his confidante and advisor (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p. 230). The years have built up a large measure of affection between them. A man may also have a favourite, usually the youngest and newest wife. The favours received by her from an over-fond husband are the source of much of the contention among co-wives. Yet even the favourite has no close contact with the husband (cf. Ward, 1938, p.24, Fadipe, 1940 p. 235). The marks of his affection are chiefly to be seen in the gifts he makes her. Public expressions of affection are proscribed as indelicate, if not indecent: they are almost entirely unknown in private (cf. Ward, 1938, pp. 36, 145). The whole situation - the parental choice of a spouse and the conception of marriage as an alliance between two kin groups rather than as a union between two mutually attracted individuals; the lack of common interests, occupations and leisure-time activities - militates against the formation of any notion of romantic attachment. In a situation in which the relationships between a number of people are largely mediated by relative structural position, emotional feeling - or at least the expression of personal emotion - would tend to impinge on the statuses and interests/

interests of too many others and disturb the delicately balanced system of rights and obligations. An incipient example of this is indicated by the tensions which a husband's favouritism may arouse. Talcott Parsons (1954, pp.187-8) points out that "This need to limit affective spontaneity is fundamentally why arranged marriages tend to be found in kinship systems where the newly married couple is incorporated into a larger kin group, but it also strongly colours the character of the marriage relationship itself, tending to place the primary institutional sanctions upon matters of objective status and obligations to other kin, not on subjective sentiment".

There is then a certain emotional detachment between husband and wife. It is accepted that a husband's attention will wander after two or three years of marriage.¹ On the part of most women there is a feeling of resignation to this, if not, indeed, relief.² A woman will then be given £5 to £10 as trading capital and with success she may achieve a certain measure of economic independence. The division of interests will proceed/

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1. This growth of indifference appears to co-incide with the establishment of pregnancy and the long subsequent period during which sexual intercourse between husband and wife is proscribed.
 2. Ward (1938, p.47) writes "In fact she (the wife) often urges him to find an outlet for his sexual activity, principally that he may leave her alone".

proceed until the ideal husband becomes one who, after begetting a number of children, allows their mother to follow her economic pursuit without let or hindrance.

On the other hand, as the following case shows, the ultimate authority of the husband still remains.

A second wife heard her husband telling his first wife that the latter's children could not have money to buy uniform or books for school as he could not afford it. The second wife therefore set herself to amass sufficient to equip her child. She worked hard until the child was of school-age, bought the requisites and laid them before the husband. He was furious that she had done all this without consulting him and receiving his prior consent. He refused to allow the child to go to school, even at the mother's expense.

The Mother-child Relationship.

Without children a woman can never obtain the enviable state of independence. The desire for progeny, particularly sons to perpetuate the ancestral tradition, renders a childless woman a creature of reproach and contempt and puts a premium on polygyny, supplementary unions and dissolution of sterile marriages. What really consolidates a marriage is the birth of a child. This is the mother's guarantee of tolerance and acceptance in her husband's compound. Membership of a lineage may be acquired only by birth: marriage does not confer upon a woman membership of her husband's lineage. Although she may live in her husband's compound/

compound most of her life, she is always a stranger there. The only way in which she may obtain recognition is by becoming the means of providing more members: her only hope of security in her old age is to produce children - preferably male children - who will care for her, feed her and protect her. An aged woman with no children is not only in straightened material circumstances. She is a social anomaly regarded with suspicion. It is barren women or those past the age of child-bearing who are suspected of the crime of witch-craft (cf. Talbot, 11, 1926, p.208). Significantly, when officers of the Atinga cult, a witch-finding movement, pointed out old women as a witch, if an adult son intervened, the charge was at once dropped (cf. Morton-Williams, 1956 b). The general pre-occupation with the maternal function of a woman is also shown by the pressure to take another wife which his kinsfolk put to bear on the husband of a childless woman. When the second wife has a child, the position of the first becomes even more difficult.

The situation is such that the mother's natural sentiments towards her children are heightened. Her hopes, interests and affections centre more and more on her children - especially her sons. In terms of actual behaviour this means that the mother becomes the source/

source of all good things to the child who may rely on her affectionate indulgence under most circumstances. The mother makes little attempt to do more than remonstrate with her sons for their misdemeanours and rarely has recourse to punishment (cf. Fadipe, 1940, pp. 243, 244). She is, however, more stringent in her control over her daughters, for whose training she is responsible.

Maternity confers on the wife a new status in respect of the wider compound context. If a woman is a wife in her husband's compound, she is also a mother. That is, a woman is in a dual social relation to her husband's lineage, as affine and as cognate. It has already been pointed out that a wife should show deference to all children born prior to her marriage; they are affinal kin. But with those born after her entry into the compound the relationship fore-shadows that when she has produced issue and has become a classificatory mother to all subsequent children of the compound. Respect is due to her in this cognatic status of mother. The content of the relationship is very different from that of the affinal relationship. In the latter she is of subordinate status structurally, although age may give her a certain seniority, and the relationship is marked by constraint. In contrast, the respect offered to her by the younger children is full of affection/

affection and reverence. This is especially so with regard to her own children. Ideally, the same attitude should attach to the relationship between a woman and the children of her co-wives. But just as the ideal of co-operation and solidarity of co-wives is often vitiated, so too is that of reciprocal affection between one wife and the children of the others.

The Father-child Relationship.

The relation between a father and his child is an ambivalent one. As members of proximal generations it partakes of the general a-symmetrical pattern mentioned in Section 9. Throughout life the father is in the dominant and authoritative role. A child is at the absolute disposal of the father who formerly, under native law and custom, had complete rights in personam and who could for example, put the child in pawn in payment of a debt or obligation (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p. 203)¹.

The behaviour of the child to its father is characterised by deference and obedience (cf. Fadipe, 1940, pp. 931-2). The father is a dignified and aloof figure, /

1. This right is demonstrated also by the custom of sara mentioned in Section 4.

figure, and there is great distance between father and child which proscribes familiar or joking behaviour. As disciplinary powers are widely diffused throughout the compound it might be thought that less fear would attach to the father-figure. Nevertheless the father is a man to approach with caution. The larger the number of wives and children he has, the greater is the distance. A man should make no discrimination among his children although a special relationship exists between a man and his eldest son who will eventually be entrusted with ritual and professional secrets.¹

Siblings and Half-siblings.

Among the children of one man the conventions of seniority are observed from a very early age (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.238). Seniority here is reckoned according to the relative age of the children and is completely independent of the relative seniority of the mothers. This ranking in terms of age rather than of mother's status places the emphasis on the solidarity of the domestic group and underlines the fact that it forms a unit at one level of segmentation with the compound structure./

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1. The eldest son and daughter have a special position within the domestic group and among the Egba, wives of the compound address them by the special terms dawodu and bere respectively.

structure.

Within the domestic group a further process of segmentation occurs. Should a man have more than one wife, the children of each form a distinct group known as omo iya, that is children of one mother. It is incumbent upon a man to give to each wife an equal share of the available resources, no matter the number of children she may have. That is, resources are divided out per stirpes, rather than per capita. (The Yoruba proverb likens a man to a tree and his wives are the branches, bearing fruit). The character of these groups and their inter-relation depend to a large extent upon the personality of the father. If he is strong-willed and amiable he may have the ability to impose a feeling of fellowship among all his wives and children, as members of one family. This is the ideal. More usually each of the groups develops intense internal loyalty coupled with a deep antagonism against the other groups and an active jealous and rivalry.

Among full siblings, as being omo iya, there is a strong feeling of identity. This close formal identification of interest among siblings cuts across the unity of the domestic groups and persists throughout life. The descriptive 'same mother, same father' implies a very binding and intimate relationship, which is expressed in the usual forms of a-reciprocal senior-junior behaviour./

behaviour. A full sibling, however, will have preferential treatment in any situation at any time.

The strong identification of full siblings militates against a similar relationship between half-siblings. This relation tends to be permeated by suspicion and rivalry although, ideally, quarrels between half-siblings are improper (cf. Fadipe, 1940, :p. 238). Each suspects the other of obtaining the lion's share of the father's bounty and each is determined to change this unhappy state of affairs to his own advantage. Quarrels over inheritance are more likely to occur between half-siblings than between siblings.

Co-wives.

It has been pointed out that the ideal relations between co-wives should be those of friendly co-operation and unity. However, the relations which obtain depend to a great extent upon the personality of the husband. In some cases he may by his equitable behaviour encourage the idea of the domestic group as a solidarity unit. More often he appears to proceed on the axiom of divide and rule, producing a state of dissension and rivalry. He should, in fact, treat all of/

of his wives with strict impartiality. All should obtain the same treatment from him (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.233): all have the right to sexual intercourse with him, the arrangements for this usually being in the hands of the iyale or senior wife.¹

The domestic organisation of the group varies and this variation reflects the type of relations between the co-wives. Where all wives and children are regarded as a single unit all the work, such as preparing food, is performed by joint endeavour under the direction of the senior wife. In other cases, each wife is regarded as an independent unit, having responsibility only for herself and her own children. When this is so each wife will prepare food for herself and her children, and for her husband in rotation with her co-wives. And each will seek to ingratiate herself with him by preparing the most tasty of his favourite dishes or by presenting him with delicacies of different kinds.

Summary.

To sum up, in Part III I have shown that emphasis on the patrilineal principle of the reckoning descent/

1. A new wife is customarily allowed a certain measure of preference until pregnancy intervenes (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.233).

descent alters a generalised acceptance of bilateral kin into a situation where the corporate exogamous patrilineal descent group assumes structural significance. The family of procreation - although it is the basic economic unit¹- operates within the context of this patrilineal system. The maintenance of the lineage is structurally the most important aspect of marriage and it is chiefly in these terms that a woman's status within her husband's lineage is determined. The primacy of the lineal bond is maintained at the expense of the conjugal bond.

1. Access to economic resources is, however, controlled by the lineage.

PART III THE MODERN KINSHIP SYSTEM

Chapter 10 The Family

Chapter 11

Chapter 12

Chapter 13 The Family and the State

Chapter 14 The Family and the Church

Chapter 15

Chapter 16 The Family and the Law

Chapter 17

Chapter 18 The Family and the Future

Chapter 19 The Family and the World

PART IV THE MODERN KINSHIP SYSTEM

SECTION II

MODERN TRENDS

Extent of Polygyny

Choice

Age

Premarital Sex Relations

Betrothal and Marriage

Residence

Irregular Unions

Infidelity

Stability of Marriage

Status of Widows.

In Part IV, after a description of modern trends and practices, I shall give an analysis of the emerging 'conjugal' type of kinship structure. It will be shown that the unity of the conjugal group is becoming enhanced at the expense of lineage loyalty. Accompanying the attenuation of lineage solidarity there is a growing tendency to regard relatives as a lineally undifferentiated body of kin.

Before a detailed consideration of modern developments in marriage practices it might be useful to recapitulate the most relevant of the factors relating to changing conditions in Nigeria and to discuss briefly their implications in relation to the system of kinship and marriage. In a situation of economic and political expansion such as obtains in Yorubaland today status is a function of achievement rather than ascription. The concomitant loss of social homogeneity and the co-existence of incompatible social values have resulted in a reckoning of status by the tangible criterion of financial success and by the material indices of this success - the car, the storey-house and so on. There are two main avenues to this goal - success in business or professional qualifications. There results two types of elite.¹ The first is the /

¹ Tardits, in a work as yet unpublished, calls these l'homme de l'argent and l'homme du papier respectively.

the 'money man'; perhaps a prosperous trader, entrepreneur, or contractor who may or may not be an educated man. The second is the professional man who has usually studied in Europe or the United States to obtain his qualifications. The inter-relation of these two ranking systems does not come within the scope of this discussion. It may, however, be noted that wealth alone does not confer entree into the highest statuses: education bestows the final imprimatur. Thus education is not merely a means of attaining a lucrative position: it implies a way of life which is associated with the former expatriate ruling-caste which acts as a reference group (Merton and Lazarsfeld, 1950).

In this aspect it is one of a cluster of related traits which includes, inter alia, European patterns of living, eating habits, style of house and furnishing and, not least of all, marriage.

Extent of Polygyny

These considerations have an immediate effect on the extent of polygamy. A European-type marriage is ipso facto a monogamous marriage and this is a legal necessity where the union is contracted under the terms of the Marriage Ordinance. Status and monogamy being closely identified, if a man /

man aspires to higher status he prefers to marry a suitable young woman monogamously, however numerous may be his other irregular associations.¹ One might expect that, with the renaissance of a new national consciousness and pride and with the emergence of an educated Moslem elite, monogamy might cease to be a concomitant of status. The present political elite, however, endorse conformity to strict monogamous standards and blameless marital lives and it would seem that this re-inforces the tendency to associate monogamy with high status.

Nor are prestige and status the only factors militating against polygyny. Under traditional economic conditions an extra wife is an additional pair of hands whose assistance outweighs the cost of sustenance. Moreover, apart from their intrinsic worth, a man's wives are an index of his wealth and rank. However, changing economic patterns have had an adverse effect on this state of affairs. A wife is no longer a productive addition to the domestic group's labour resources. Each step away from a subsistence economy is accompanied by new needs and by improvements in material standards of living. Previous luxuries become present day necessities. The cost of living increases. /

¹ Merton and Kitt (op.cit.) have pointed out that in an open society behaviour referring to a reference group is frequently anticipatory, that is, a socially mobile individual adopts the behaviour appropriate to the group to which he aspires.

increases. In this context polygyny becomes a liability instead of an asset.

A third factor is the influence of religious opinion. The attitude of the Christian churches towards polygamy is firm and consistent. A practising Christian is encouraged, if not obliged, to restrict himself to one wife. It would seem, however, that in some respects the churches have lost this battle. Yoruba men find it well within their power to combine an earnest spirit of Christian devotion with a lusty appreciation of the sensual pleasures of polygyny.✓ Thus while the attitude of the churches on this point is fully recognised, it seems to be a lesser factor than economic exigency in the incidence of monogamy. The conjunction of Christian proscriptions and considerations of prestige and finance is an historical accident. Religious dictum reinforces the trend towards monogamy, but it is not the instrumental factor.

In considering Tables 6 to 9 we may divide those involved into two categories: those whose occupation implies some degree of education and those who may be assumed to have had little or no schooling. In the first category (A) may be placed professional men and women, teachers, clerks and skilled workers; in the latter (B) traders, farmers, seamstresses /

seamstresses and labourers. Of 90 statutory marriages (Table 6), 65 (72%) involved men of category A, 39 (43%) women of category A. Table 9 shows that of the 11 marriages which took place at the District Office, 7 were between persons of category A, 4 between men of category A and women of category B. Of the 13 church marriages (Table 8), 3 were between persons of category A, 4 involved a category A man and a category B woman, and 6 were marriages between category B men and women. These figures, while statistically unreliable, give some indication of the relationship between education and statutory marriage. It should also be noted that in cases of marriages of category B persons, these were usually celebrated in a church.

Table 6 /

<u>Place of Marriage</u>					<u>Tribal Origin</u>			<u>Woman's Occupation</u>			<u>Man's Occupation</u>					
R.C.	Angli- :can	Bap- tist	Apos- tolic	Dis- tric Office	Ibo	Yoruba	Others	Tea- cher Clerk etc.	Trader	Seams- tress	None	Pro- fess- ional	Tea- cher Clerk etc.	Trader	Farmer	lab- ourer
30	10	3	8	39	20	66	4	39	13	16	22	7	58	4	2	19

<u>Woman's Age</u>			<u>Man's Age</u>				<u>TOTAL</u>
16-20	21-25	26-30	31-	16-20	21-25	26-30	31-
17	55	15	3	0	25	45	20
							90

TABLE 6: Marriages registered at the Ibadan District Office from November 1955 to March 1956.

Place of Marriage			Tribal Origin				Woman's Occupation			Man's Occupation			Lab- our			
R.C.	Angli- can	Apos- tolic	Dis- trict Office	Ibo M	Yoruba M	Euro- pean M	F	Tea- cher Clerk etc.	Trader	Seams- tress	Others	Tea- cher Clerk etc.	Trader	Farmer	Lab- our	
3	7	3	11	3	3	20	21	1	0	10	5	4	18	1	1	4

Woman's Age				Man's Age		
16-20	21-25	26-30		21-25	26-30	31-
3	18	3		9	15	0

TABLE 7: Information in respect of the 24 marriages registered at the Ibadan District Office between 15:2:56 and 19:3:56.

	<u>Church</u>	<u>Occupations</u>	<u>Ages</u>	<u>Tribe</u>
		Man/Woman	Man/Woman	
1.	Apostolic	Farmer/Trader	24/21	Yoruba
2.	Apostolic	Sawyer/Trader	26/23	Yoruba
3.	C. M. S. (Anglican)	Clerk/Seamstress	29/22	Yoruba
4.	C. M. S.	Trader/Domestic	25/17	Yoruba
5.	C. M. S.	Teacher/Teacher	26/25	Yoruba
6.	C. M. S.	Teacher/Clerical	26/22	Yoruba
7.	C. M. S.	Teacher/Seamstress	25/22	Yoruba
8.	Apostolic	Church Evangelist/ Trader	26/23	Yoruba
9.	C. M. S.	Teacher/Teacher	25/21	Yoruba
10.	C. M. S.	Teacher/Seamstress	27/24	Yoruba
11.	R. C.	Labourer/Domestic	24/19	Ibo
12.	R. C.	Railway Worker/ Domestic	25/21	Ibo
13.	R. C.	P.W.D. Turner/ Domestic	24/17	Ibo

TABLE 8: Thirteen marriages celebrated in churches
(see Table 7) in Ibadan - 15:2:56 to
19:3:56.

	<u>Occupations</u> Man/Woman	<u>Ages</u> Man/Woman	<u>Tribe</u>
1.	Teacher/Teacher	27/21	Yoruba
2.	Clerk/Clerk	30/29	Yoruba
3.	Technician/Seamstress	26/24	Yoruba
4.	Teacher/Trader	24/23	Yoruba
5.	Clerk/Domestic	24/21	Yoruba
6.	Cocoa Survey Worker/ Trader	26/21	Yoruba
7.	Technician (Agric.Dept.)/ Teacher	29/28	Yoruba
8.	Teacher/Midwife	27/24	Yoruba
9.	Field Over-seer/ Teacher	30/24	Yoruba
10.	Journalist/Journalist	30/28	Man - European Woman - Yoruba
11.	Clerk/Clerk	27/23	Yoruba

TABLE 9: Eleven marriages contracted in the District Office, Ibadan (see Table 7) - 15:2:56 to 19:3:56.

Month	1954	Year 1955	1956
January		14	50
February		17	12
March		3	19
April		18	
May		9	
June		5	
July		9	
August		13	
September		6	
October		14	
November		1	
December	13	8	

TABLE 10: No. of marriages registered at the District Office, Ibadan, between December 1954 and March 1956.

The situation is one in which marital status is a function of social and economic status. Those who most closely approximate to the traditional economic pattern of subsistence farming, that is the peasant farmers, and those who have had little or no education, although they may be rich 'money' men, are polygamists. Monogamy occurs more frequently as educational standards improve and is practically incumbent upon professional men, politicians, senior service officials, Christian teachers and ministers. The same is true in the case of women: educational and occupational status correlates highly with type of marriage. One must, however, keep in mind the fact that the numbers concerned are minute in relation to the total population. Thus in Ibadan district, with a total population of 459,196, only 211 statutory marriages took place from December 1954 to March 1956. (Table 10).

So far as individual attitudes are concerned, men are finding that in the modern situation polygyny does not pay, in advantages either of a material or of an immaterial nature, but they cast rather regretful glances at the polygamous past. Women are alive to the social and personal disadvantages it carries in its wake. The sorrows of a polygamous household are well understood by the women who emphasise the discord, jealousy and rivalry which, under modern conditions, appear /

appear almost inseparable from it. The opinion of 150 secondary school girls is almost unanimous - the ideal is a monogamous match. Only six stated that they would rather be married polygamously than remain single.

Choice

Today the majority of marriages are by personal choice (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p. 972) although the approval of the father is still sought. His advice is not however always welcomed. The extent of individual freedom in picking a bride or a bridegroom is related to factors which have been discussed above in connection with monogamy. As distance from the traditional way of life increases the emancipation of the individual from lineage control also increases. Thus a young man working on the lineage farmland under the control of his father or some other elder is more likely to have his first wife selected for him by elder members of the lineage group. Choice of subsequent wives is generally a more personal affair. In the case of women the position is more conservative: they have less liberty of selection and are more subject to lineage dictates. Rarely, however, is any person, male or female, forced into a distasteful union. Educated men, and to a lesser degree women, are at greater liberty in choosing a spouse. However, even among the educated minority, parents, /

parents, many of whom still hold traditional views and preferences, try to influence choice. Nevertheless, although the consent of kinsfolk, especially parents, remains a part of the ideal pattern, it has been displaced as a necessary condition of the validity of a marriage. The Marriage Ordinance explicitly lays down the requirement of mutual consent of the two parties to a statutory union.

Mrs. O., a graduate of an English university, and her husband, also a graduate, were both, prior to the marriage, engaged to other individuals. Despite the violent opposition of their respective kin-groups they broke these engagements in order to marry each other. There is a deep bond of companionship and affection between the couple who live on an isolated reservation near the school where Mr. O. teaches. The opposition of their kinsfolk has now abated with the establishment of a fait accompli, but it broke out at the birth of their second and third children, both of whom appeared at improperly short intervals, in flagrant contravention of the traditional proscription on sexual intercourse for a period of at least 14 months after parturition.

At the same time there is an interesting narrowing of the range of kinsfolk to whom reference is made for approval of a union. Previously a large number of lineage relatives were involved: now there is a tendency for a young man or woman to refer only to parents and to other immediate kin, both patrilineal and matrilineal.

In spite of the pressure of the traditionalists, the narrow limits of marital choice are being extended.

Choice /

Choice is no longer restricted to someone in the same sub-tribal group, while there are many examples of marriages occurring with persons of non-Yoruba tribal origin (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p. 130). Prohibitions of consanguinity and affinity are no longer observed to the same degree nor with the same rigidity. Thus a couple who are known to be affines, or even kin, of remote degree have been known to wed (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p. 366). Parents and others of the ascendant generation may regard the union askance, but often no preventative measures beyond expressions of disapproval are made. In the same way a marriage may now be contracted by two young people who have perhaps been reared together in the same house or compound but between whom no relationship beyond putative kinship can be traced. Again there may be a certain reserve in the public reaction to the announcement of such a match but it is accepted. Nevertheless such marriages are still the exception and we may see in the following case the tenacity of the traditional rules.

A young woman, trained in the United Kingdom in domestic science and catering, fell in love with a doctor, the son of her mother's second husband by his first wife. There was no blood relationship and the affinal one was of the second degree. Nevertheless pressure brought to bear by kinsfolk was too strong and the young couple did not marry.

At /

At the same time as the relaxation in the traditional marriage regulations is progressing, there is an interesting trend towards a new kind of endogamy based on educational attainments. An educated man looks for a wife of the same or similar educational standard as himself. An educated girl wishes to marry a man who is at least as well-educated as she is, preferably better educated. This tendency to marry within an educational category is one factor in the cutting across of tribal and sub-tribal groupings and is often in direct opposition to parental preferences and prejudices.

There was, for example, the young radiographer who had trained in the United Kingdom. On her return to Nigeria she left behind her fiance, a Yoruba boy who was studying law. She broke off the engagement and married an Ibo doctor who was working in the same hospital as she. Her father was furious at her 'disgraceful conduct' and has refused to have anything to do with her in the three years since her marriage.

To an educated man an educated wife offers certain advantages - not least being in terms of status. Apart from the prestige a well-educated young woman possesses by virtue of her own education and profession, she can make the kind of home a man wishes to have and she can bring up his children according to the new lights. If she works her salary may play an important part in augmenting the domestic income. Demand outruns supply and a man may select a young schoolgirl as attractive, /

attractive, intelligent and desirable; become engaged to her and contribute to her further education and training. There is, however, many a slip, and it is not unusual for elderly men to be deprived of their fiancées by younger bloods at the point when the girls have finished their training and are in all respects fit to be meet mates.

Such a case recently figured largely in the British press. A prominent Yoruba politician became engaged to a young girl and sent her to England to train completely at his expense. In addition he made certain appreciable gifts to her father and gave him the use of a large car. The young girl, however, met another Yoruba in England and married him secretly.

This illustrates the dilemma that faces a man. Education bestows upon a woman not only knowledge but also a sense of personal liberty and responsibility. It also leaves her with few illusions as to men's abilities and duties: she becomes a colleague and an informed critic. An illiterate woman on the other hand regards her husband with respect, and, if he is educated, even awe. Thus while a man will, in general, prefer marriage with an educated girl yet much praise is bestowed on the fidelity, obedience and gratitude of uneducated women.

The demand for educated wives does not mean that literacy itself is the sole criterion. Some kind of specific occupational or professional training is preferred. /

preferred. Thus a girl whose education has not gone beyond the secondary school stage may find it difficult to become the wife of a man of a high enough educational standard, or she may cast her eyes unsuccessfully in the direction of men of professional status. If marriage seems impossible she may be willing to enter into an irregular union with a man of higher status rather than marry beneath the level of her aspirations.

Age

Among all the factors concerned in the modern trends two have had an immediate effect on the age at which marriage takes place. In the first place the increasing extension of educational facilities and attendance at school until the age of 17 or 18, together with the possibility of further training, lead to a postponement of marriage. An examination of Tables 8 and 9 shows that of the 21 women marrying below the age of 25, 14 (66%) were non-literate (that is, this number included all those who, it is assumed here, are non-literate). However, of the 10 literate women, 7 married before 25 and 3 after 25 years. Of the literate men 14 married after 25, 4 before; while 5 of the non-literate men married before 25 and one after this age. From these few cases it may at least be seen that the non-literate women married in their early twenties and the /

the literate men tended to marry after 25. Since Ordinance marriage is usually associated with status and education, it would appear that education imposes later marriage. Secondly, the economic complications of the new dispensation mean that a man or woman who wishes to be educated and to adopt the new way of life must be free from any financial obligations during the time of training and at marriage he or she must be in a position to set up house in proper style. Thus considerations of an economic nature also serve to postpone marriage.

Of the 90 marriages registered under the Marriage Ordinance during the period from November 1955 to March 1956 (Table 6), 73 (81%) of the women were over 20 years of age, 18 (20%) over 25 years and 3 (3%) over 30 years. Of the men there were none younger than 20, 65 (72%) were over 25 years of age and 20 (22%) over 30 years. (Cf. Fadipe, 1940, p. 173. He estimates that marriage takes place under modern conditions between the ages of 25 and 30.)

The postponement of the age of marriage poses a serious problem for the young woman who has, say, been to the United Kingdom for training and finds herself in her late twenties. Up to the age of 27 or so she is still eligible: each year beyond that is a diminution of her marriagability. She will have less chance of marrying /

marrying a man of qualifications on a par with her own and may have to take a man of much lower social status. Instead of a doctor, for example, she may marry a rich but ill-educated trader or business man.

Pre-marital Sex Relations

Associated with the rise in the average age of marriage is an increase in pre-marital sex relations. Fadipe (1940, p. 972) suggests that pre-marital chastity is now the exception. If a man is not yet in a position to marry he may enjoy a number of affairs (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p. 299). The partners in these affairs are often secondary school girls (cf. Fadipe, 1940, pp. 177, 267) or young women working as shop assistants or in offices. These girls have the attractions of an educated woman: they do not sit silently and with downcast eyes as tradition prescribes but are vivacious and attractive, good conversationalists and enjoyable companions. For their part, they may be living away from the parental home, or their education may remove them from the full stringency of parental control. The standard of dress and ornament to which they aspire is high in relation to their means. In forming a liaison with a man who can afford to provide the little luxuries they desire they ensure for themselves gifts of clothes and jewellery and all the attention and excitement for which they crave and which is denied to them in any other situation or relationship.

A woman who has received education beyond secondary school level is in rather a different position. She can afford to keep herself at a fairly high standard of living and she associates with professional men on an equal social footing. Nevertheless she finds herself in a very delicate situation. Whether she is chaste or not, if her behaviour is less than modest and circumspect, quiet and serious, her reputation is besmirched. It is still difficult for the Yoruba to conceive of a relationship between two people of different sexes which is not sexual (cf. Ward, 1937, p. 9). Social intercourse between a man and a woman implies sexual intercourse. On the other hand, if she maintains the reserve which will protect her from aspersion she may be criticised for undue pride.

In fact, the young women who have studied abroad are considered in general to be sexually indiscriminate and it is alleged, rather enviously, that they protect themselves from the results of their promiscuity by their knowledge of modern contraceptives and abortifacients. This seems to be a male exaggeration which is indicative of the ambivalent attitude of the men towards educated women. Such women can no longer merely be relegated to the category of housewives and mothers. Occupationally and financially they are the equal of men. The latter are fighting to maintain their social and /

and sexual superiority. Their attitude towards the women combines respect and resentment - respect for their achievements: resentment for their new demands and expectations. Perhaps this is part of the reason why some young women of high socio-economic status find it difficult to make suitable marriages. Their company is sought after and they may form friendships which often include sexual intimacies. If these result in pregnancy this may be a welcome means of persuading a recalcitrant lover into marriage.

There is a significant number of unmarried mothers. If an unmarried woman has a child and if the genitor accepts it as his, it takes his name and becomes his social child. If the genitor is unknown, or denies paternity, the child may live in the home of the mother's father and become a member of this kin group. No social stigma attaches to the child, particularly in cases where the genitor is a man of importance. As regards the mother, sanctions of social disapproval operate but there is little ostracism (cf. Ward, 1938, p. 34). She should have little difficulty in marrying provided that she has not been labelled promiscuous. She will, however, rarely marry a man of the highest education or social standing.

A highly qualified young woman who had spent four years in the United Kingdom for professional training arrived back in Nigeria with a baby son. The father was a Yoruba lawyer who subsequently married someone else. It was generally agreed that the young woman had spoilt all /

all her chances of marrying a man of high professional status and in fact she recently became engaged to a man whose professional training consists of a nine months' course in a technical college in England.

It must, however, be added that if a woman in this situation has no profession and is not living in her home town or with kinsfolk, she suffers from all the disabilities which beset an unmarried mother when no economic or social provision is available for her or her child.

Betrothal and Marriage

With the new emphasis on personal choice in marriage the element of mutual attraction becomes more important (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p. 366) and this is producing a formalisation of new courting practices. Young people meet at church, at functions of one sort or another, or at work. When mutual interest is established the young man calls on the girl in her parents' home. There he will be assessed, and accepted or rejected as a suitable suitor. If accepted, he will pay frequent visits to her home and escort her to public functions. But there is little privacy for the couple if the girl is a respectable young woman of good family. Once the proposed match is accepted, photographs of the couple are taken and hung in the public rooms of their homes. This is one of the easiest ways to determine the eligibility of a young man, and a girl's first endeavour is /

is to visit his home to see what standard of living is his and to inspect his walls for rivals.

The majority of Yoruba still marry in accordance with native law and custom. However, where considerations of religion or of socio-economic status intervene, a church or civil ceremony may be performed in addition to customary rites. An Ordinance marriage is to a large extent an assertion of social status and the occasion of a vast and of ten crippling amount of conspicuous consumption (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p. 370). It adds a cachet to any union. So much is this so that a couple who have been married for a number of years under native law and custom may undergo a church ceremony, their children sometimes acting as bridesmaids and pages. The same prestige factors may also lie behind the 'parlour wedding'. This occurs in cases where a church ceremony cannot be celebrated in a Christian church because of existing customary unions. The parlour wedding takes place in the home of one of the celebrants. The local minister carried out a modified version of the marriage ceremony and gives his blessing to the union.

Even in traditional circles where the customary rites are the only ones, there is a blurring of the ritual and disagreements occur as to the correct procedure. This process, by which the outline of traditional behaviour is becoming obscured, is proceeding in /

in every phase of the marriage customs.¹ Before marriage the avoidances previously incumbent upon the girl are no longer strictly enjoined. In addition to the customary ijohun and idanan fees, gifts are now made to the girl herself (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p. 369). The traditional services and presentations exacted by the girl's kinsfolk are being commuted into cash payments (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p. 174). After marriage the period of seclusion of the bride is no longer always rigidly observed.

Residence

One of the most important trends in present day married life is the movement from the husband's compound into a house or apartment. With the geographical mobility which the modern ways of making a living entail many are now living away from their native town. If a man has a government appointment he must be ready for transfer /

¹ It is also at work elsewhere. For example, native medicines and precautions are being superseded by modern techniques. A woman now attends an ante-natal clinic, delivers her child at hospital and receives post-natal care. Such modern behaviour makes it difficult to adhere to traditional rites and ceremonies. Many are obsolete or obsolescent. If a child is born in hospital the placenta will not be readily available for the customary burial. The period of seclusion for mother and babe is being transformed from a ritual period of withdrawal to a time of convalescence. Face marking for boys, cliterodectomy for girls are no longer practised. The naming ceremony is slowly losing its implications of lineage solidarity and becoming an occasion of festivity and congratulation. Its performance depends on the memory and enthusiasm of the older women who organise it for their grandchildren.

transfer to any station. Another factor is the movement towards the larger centres which creates a substantial 'stranger' population. Accommodation is needed. A certain number of government quarters are provided for senior officials but they are in limited supply. Houses are being built by private enterprise to be rented out either as complete units or as single rooms. This is in fact one of the principal types of investment among the Yoruba today, and one which yields extremely high returns.

But the tendency to leave the lineage compound is not restricted to those leaving their native town in search of a living. More and more married couples are moving out of the husband's compound and setting up house alone. Another manifestation of this splitting up of the traditional residential unit into conjugal groupings is the erection of separate storey houses within the confines of the compound on lineage land by prospering members of the lineage for themselves, their wives and their children (cf. Fadipe, 1940, pp. 245-6).

Government quarters normally comprise a bungalow with large communicating rooms, although modern flats are now being erected. Many of the privately built houses are of the bungalow type but a new style has developed which is similar neither to the traditional compound nor to this 'colonial' pattern.

The /

The building is rectangular and has a wide central corridor running from front to back door with rooms at each side. At the back of the house and separate from it is the kitchen building. Houses of this pattern may be single or double storeyed. They may be built of mud-bricks with a plaster surface but the latest trend is towards structures of hollow concrete slabs. In the larger towns most new dwellings are provided with a rather erratic piped water supply. Most new houses are also equipped with some type of modern sanitation.

The type of house in which one lives correlates highly with socio-economic status. A peasant farmer lives in his lineage compound: the migrating unskilled labourer, artisan or clerk hires a room: the successful business man builds himself a house: the professional man or senior service official, in general, lives in a house approximating to the 'colonial' type, often in government residential areas or in the new suburbs.

Irregular Unions

An irregular union has been described earlier as one where there is habitual intercourse and acknowledgment of the fact between a man and a woman. An 'outside' wife, as she is often called, is generally the iyawo of a man married monogamously under the Marriage Ordinance who is legally, and because of considerations of prestige, unable to establish an polygamous household. The iyawo is /

is therefore installed in another house where the man may visit her at his pleasure (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p. 283) and where he maintains her as if she were, de jure, his wife.

In terms of the law such an 'outside marriage' has no status. This imposes certain disabilities on the woman. A woman who enters into such a union may live with, or more properly, be supported by, her oko for many years. The union may result in issue. In the eyes of the world she is his iyawo and her children his. If the man dies it may be that the woman and their children will be cared for by the lineage group. In this respect the children are the mother's pledge for future security, especially in cases where the irregular union has been arranged by the man's kinsfolk because of the childlessness of the legal wife. If the 'outside wife' has no children, there is less chance of his kin-group looking after her. However, it may be that the woman is not in a position to appeal for assistance to her oko's kin who may be in another town. Unless the man has made legal provision for her and the children, she has no claim on his estate, and she may be left to fend for herself and her off-spring as best she can. Nor are the disabilities confined to her position in the event of the death of the man. If, at any point in the relationship, he wishes to discard his responsibilities he is at full liberty to do so. The woman has no redress at law nor, since the union has not been ratified under /

under native law and custom, can she appeal to his or her kin-group to arbitrate. Should she apply to a court of law he may legally deny the children which are socially recognised as his, rather than lay himself open to claims of maintenance.¹ Thus there is now developing a problem new to Yoruba society - the illegitimate child. Such a child is not a bastard in the sense that it has no pater: it is socially recognised as the child of Mr. X and takes his name. It is a statutory anomaly.

The social validity of irregular unions is determined to a great extent by the immediate circumstances and situation. In the first place, the man concerned is often a man of high occupational and social status. The woman is rarely highly educated. Or she may have been divorced or in some other way declassée. There is, then, usually a disparity in status between the man and his 'outside' wife which does not, however, imply the relation between them is immoral or socially unacceptable. The union may have been arranged by the man's kinsfolk and it may be tolerated, if not indeed encouraged, by hers, especially if he is a person of high status or great wealth. On the other hand the status differential does imply a divergence from the general aspirations towards a companionate /

¹ Children of an irregular union are usually recognised as having as full rights of inheritance as if they were born of a legal union (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.282). However, a legal wife could invoke the law to declare them illegitimate and thus avoid dividing the inheritance. This is rarely done because of the strength of public opinion against it.

companionate type of marriage which appears to be one of the traits associated with high status. Secondly, the irregular union may or may not be secret. If the connection is secret the first intimation the wife may receive may be at a public function when the 'outside' wife is point out to her (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.282). Or the 'outside' wife may decide to force the issue by sending food to the man (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.282). Even if the irregular union is an open secret contacts between the legal wife and the 'outside' wife are infrequent and are usually confined to occasions of kinship significance such as marriage celebrations, naming ceremonies, widows' outings and so on. Where the relationship is explicit etiquette demands that the role of the 'outside' wife is similar to that of a traditional junior wife (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.283). A woman who is known to be an 'outside' wife is not, therefore, shunned or ostracised. She appears at kinship functions and is known publicly as the wife of X.¹ However, on official occasions and at formal functions where, in general, English etiquette prevails, she will not be present or, if she is, she will not be escorted by the man nor will she be included in his party.

As has been pointed out it may be argued that an irregular union comes within a sociological definition /

¹ She is not, however, known as Mrs. X. This title refers only to the wife of a statutory union.

definition of marriage as being a recognised association between a man and a woman in which the former is given exclusive sexual access to the latter, the issue of which is socially accepted. There are, however, certain somewhat invidious reservations which must be considered in respect of the word "recognised". For such a union has no legal recognition. The co-existence of two unreconciled legal marriage systems has produced a situation in which the union has no legal validity in either system, nor the participants any legal security. As no idanan is paid, the man may claim none of the customary damages from a seducer (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.282), nor may the woman demand maintenance for herself or her children under customary law. As the statutory requirements have not been complied with neither may have recourse to the provisions of the Marriage Ordinance. At the same time social recognition is restricted. A careful examination seems to show that acceptance is limited to occasions involving the woman as a genetrix. That is, in terms of the traditional kinship structure, she is accepted in so far as she has attained cognatic status vis-a-vis the man's lineage. As far as the emerging status system is concerned her recognition is less assured. The equivocal nature of an irregular union is also suggested by the anomalous position of the children who may be accepted socially but /

but denied legally by the father. An irregular union has neither full legal nor full social acceptance and it may, I think, be said that it is not a marriage. However, if it is not marriage, neither is it casual, uncontrolled and completely unsanctioned sexual intercourse. It is a more or less permanent association, the children of which are generally socially recognised. If one distinguishes clearly between the jural and conjugal aspects of a union, one comes to the basic difference between a marriage and an irregular union. In the former the validity of the conjugal bond is ratified by law. In the latter this ratification is lacking: it becomes a tolerated rather than an acceptable union.¹

Translating social values into individual attitudes one may see that the attitude of the 'outside' wife towards the legal wife is one of resentment. She envies the latter's legal security and her social superiority. On the part of the legal wife fear of the 'other woman' reaches over-riding proportions. She is afraid that the husband will squander the domestic resources on the outside woman and her offspring. She is jealous of the time he spends in the other's house. She /

¹ A distinction may also, I believe, be drawn between an irregular union and concubinage. In the latter the man possesses complete rights over the woman as an object or chattel, and the institution, where it occurs, is recognised by law as at least a permissible practice, if of inferior status as compared with regular marriage.

She fears to be ousted by the other from her home. Most wives seem to compromise with an unhappy position by an unspoken agreement to ignore the whole situation (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.283), and this is especially so in the case of a childless woman who seeks by her complaisance to purchase comparative resignation to her infertility from her husband and his kin (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.194).

Mrs. B. is in the unhappy position of having no children. She is a graduate, as is her husband, and they lived very happily together. However, the mother and other kinsfolk of Mr. B. put pressure on him to take another, fruitful, wife. In fact they provided him with a girl whom they installed in a house in another part of town. Mr. B. succumbed to this temptation. As Mrs. B. is his statutory wife his relationship with the girl has no legal status. She has borne him two children who have full access to the house in which Mrs. B. lives. Mrs. B. permits this, but she would rebel if their mother sought admission. She accepts the situation but is far from happy about it. She experiences acute feelings of insecurity and these are exacerbated by the inevitable division of Mr. B's interests between his two establishments. Mrs. B. acknowledges that her own defensive reactions may not ease the relationship, but she points out that conflict is implicit in the situation itself. Formerly she enjoyed a companionate type of marriage: now she is involved in what is to all intents a polygynous union, without however either the protection of the traditional checks and balances or the prerogatives which fall to a senior wife. While she appears with her husband at official and formal functions which are barred to the mother of his children, the latter figures much more largely in festivities of a kinship nature and has the backing of Mr. B's relatives. Mr. B. spends less time with Mrs. B. and more with the other girl, leaving Mrs. B. with many lonely hours which she now devotes to her work and to voluntary associations.

As long as the outside wife is kept out of the house, the legal wife will refrain from open war.

An /

An English-trained nursing sister, married to a lawyer, gave birth to a baby boy. The naming ceremony was held on the appropriate day. Among the guests was a woman who turned out to be the outside wife of the father of the baby. The wife was extremely upset as she is one of those who have to some extent acquired an English idea of companionate marriage and she was much more affected by this evidence of infidelity than many other Yoruba women, few of whom, in general, expect their husbands to remain faithful. Although most of her friends were ironical about her expectations of fidelity, there was a general feeling among those present that the husband had over-stepped the limits of decent behaviour by bringing the other woman into the house.

The children of irregular unions are usually given free access to their father's house. Some wives will not, however, allow them to come. For instance:

The wife of a judge is of very good parentage, both her father's kin and that of her mother being very wealthy and influential. She herself is a graduate of Oxford University. The couple live in government quarters in an isolated residential area. The outside wife of the judge lives in town in his lineage compound with her children who are not allowed to visit their father in his official residence as the wife has objected to their presence there.

Infidelity

In the modern situation one of the most frequent statements made concerns the marked trend towards marital infidelity. Such unsubstantiated remarks are, of course, the most difficult of phenomena to verify but the truth may be seen reflected in the instability of customary marriage. In general the extra-marital excursions of a wife are more seriously condemned than those /

those of a husband. These do occur but they are usually the first stages of a divorce and re-marriage. They mark the break-up of a marriage rather than an incidental adventure. The most flagrant of male infidelity occurs among those of a fairly high socio-economic status. These young man, confined to one wife by marriage under the Ordinance, spend much of their leisure outvying one another in their amorous conquests. The wives accept the situation as a regrettable inevitability. They do not like it but they feel that their position is not secure enough to endanger it by interfering with the men's pleasures. The supply of wealthy well-educated men is limited and many young women are prepared to accept them on any terms. These young women may be senior schoolgirls or educated working women. They wish love affairs with 'big' men because of the presents which naturally accrue and the gay life which is enjoyed. These temporary affairs may develop into an irregular union. They are, however, quite distinct from the latter. The women concerned are not set up in establishments, nor is the relationship normally of long duration.

A relationship which is more contractual in nature is that with the 'hotel girls' who form a group of attractive, vivacious charmers often endowed with considerable intelligence. They meet and entertain the /

the men in the dance halls and take them to their rooms for sexual intercourse. These girls are not prostitutes in the sense in which the word is usually employed. The men with whom they associate must please them. The evenings will be spent in dancing, drinking and merriment in the hotel or dance hall. This relationship is, paradoxically, the nearest Yoruba approach to a friendly platonic relationship between the sexes, but it is still firmly institutionalised within a sexual context.

Stability of Marriage

Marriages which are contracted under the Ordinance fall into two major categories - those contracted as an assertion of social status and a minority contracted under the pressure of a Christian sect. Of the latter category most occur in the Roman Catholic and Apostolic churches. Since it is to satisfy religious scruples rather than prestige requirements, church marriages may occur between illiterate and semi-literate converts. Ignorance of the statutory law and of the implications of a ceremony in a place of worship licensed for marriage, quite apart from the prohibitive cost,¹ precludes divorce. Although there are no statistics available it would not be unreasonable to suppose that this type of Ordinance marriage is no more stable/

¹ This may be anything from £200, in a country where the average income per year is £34.

stable than the normal native law and custom union. In several cases which came to my notice a dissolution of the union was obtained at the native courts without any mention being made of Ordinance commitments. By their re-marriage the ignorant parties were committing an unwitting statutory offence. In other cases the couples separate without formality at all.

Among those who marry monogamously because of considerations of prestige the incidence of divorce is not high.¹ Adultery, cruelty or desertion are the most usual grounds advanced for the divorce. In several cases the marriage was one contracted by the young man and woman before the former went abroad for further study. On his return after several years he found his wife an unsuitable partner for his new position.

One young man, a railway clerk, contracted an Ordinance marriage in church with a semi-literate girl. She bore three children. He left Nigeria to study engineering in the United Kingdom and spent nine years there, meanwhile becoming engaged in England to a nurse, the daughter of an influential Lagosian. His wife and children were left to fend for themselves, although they were given occasional assistance by his mother, a trader. On his return to Nigeria adultery on the part of his wife was easily proved and provided a useful escape from an uncongenial union which was impeding a more illustrious one.

Because /

¹ An examination of the records of the Ibadan High Court yielded 5 cases of divorce in 1954 and 4 in 1955. However, Fadipe (1940, p.280) states that Christian marriages are no longer as stable as they were prior to 1925 and he claims that divorce and judicial separation are features of Lagos society.

Because of the problem of adjustment which a prolonged stay abroad entails it is now felt that students going to Europe or the United States should be accompanied by their wives in order that the latter too may develop the same outlook. In such cases the wives also usually attend courses, often in needlework or domestic science.

The wife of a senior civil servant accompanied him to England when he went to take a course in administration. She attended classes in dressmaking. After spending three years with him in the United Kingdom she expects to be 'treated like an English wife' and reacts vociferously to any suggestion of infidelity or overbearingness on the part of her husband.

As Schneider (1953) points out, in a consideration of the stability of marriage four aspects may be differentiated: the jural, conjugal, temporal and personal. The facility whereby customary unions may be terminated leads to a fairly high correlation of the jural and conjugal aspects of marital stability. As far as statutory unions are concerned, the contract is much more difficult to abrogate. The position, therefore, is that, where jural criteria are applied, Ordinance marriages appear to have a high rate of stability. Where, however, the criterion is conjugality it would seem that statutory marriage is more unstable than the number of divorces would indicate.

Many /

Many women live apart from their husbands. Such women may have lovers but they are discreet about it. If they are employed by Government the conjugal breach may be slightly disguised by an application for transfer to another town. Where a woman trades it is also difficult to know whether she has left her husband or whether her trading commitments keep her away from him temporarily.

Related to this question of conjugal instability is the attitude of men who have obtained statutory divorce. Many of these now prefer to avoid the possible expense and complications of a possible future divorce and either contract subsequent unions under native law and custom or become involved in irregular unions.

An honours graduate married an English-trained schoolmistress under the Ordinance. After an unsatisfactory marriage they divorced. He subsequently contracted a native law and custom marriage with a nurse and this union appears to be successful.

Other divorced men are entering conjugal unions which are not contracted under either legal system.

The director of a public corporation divorced his wife, a nursing sister, after an Ordinance marriage of seven years. He has now entered into two irregular unions. One of the women is installed in this official quarters in the government residential area. She has three children. The other has one.

Women who marry under the Ordinance and then divorce may devote themselves to their career and either become associated illicitly with some man in an irregular union or have lovers. If financially independent, few women will re-marry.

The former wife of a prominent man in the medical administration is a case in point. She owns and runs a school for girls, runs a catering business and is involved in much voluntary work. Unlike her husband, she has not remarried although her love life is notorious.

If a divorced woman is not able to maintain herself she will contract another union, usually with a man of lower socio-economic status than the first husband.

The break-up of a marriage, among the Yoruba as elsewhere, implies a deterioration in the relations between husband and wife. A woman may experience such a revulsion of feeling against her former husband that she no longer wishes to bear his name. Announcements appear from time to time in the columns of the daily newspapers to the effect that Mrs. X. now wishes to be known as Miss Y - her maiden name. Nor are the feelings of the man any more tender towards his former wife as the following excerpt from an Ibadan newspaper shows.

DISCLAIMER

This is to inform the general public that G... T... O... nee Miss I... has ceased to be my wife as from Thursday, 16th June, 1955. This is due to a fact that she proved herself to be a prostitute. Any transaction with her in my name is not valid.
G... O...

Status /

Status of Widows

The widow of a man to whom she has been married under the Ordinance is assured of inheritance of the husband's property by the provisions of the law. This is the source of great conflict and ill-feeling between a widow and her deceased husband's kin group and gives point to the marked disagreement between the lineage group and the conjugal group. The lineage is traditionally the group with residuary rights in property with wives as a peripheral category who are left dependent upon the lineage. Under the English legal system it is the wife who is the principal legatee and it is she rather than the lineage who has responsibility for the care and upbringing of any children there may be. To a woman married under the Ordinance, then, the death of her husband does not leave her to the mercy of the lineage. If he was a rich man, she will in fact be at an advantage, with full control over his estate. Even in the most traditional circles widow inheritance is gradually dying out. A woman may go her own way if she has the means to support herself or if she has children to do so for her.

SECTION 12

THE CONJUGAL SYSTEM AND THE DOMESTIC GROUP

The Marriage Ordinance

The Conjugal System

The Marriage Relationship

The Lineage versus the Domestic Group

The Husband-Wife Relationship

The Status of Women

Parenthood

Polygynous Households

Summary

The material in the previous section has shown that many changes are occurring in the organisation of kinship and marriage. In this section I shall analyse the new trends in behaviour in order to isolate the emerging 'conjugal' type of structure.

The Marriage Ordinance

We have seen that considerations of prestige and respectability may lead to statutory marriage, that is to marriage contracted in terms of the Marriage Ordinance, 1914, (Cap.128 of the 1948 Revised Edition of the Laws of Nigeria) with the option of either a religious or a civil ceremony. The Marriage Ordinance is based on English law and prescribes the voluntary and legal union of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others. The three important points are the free consent of the two parties to the marriage contract, the proscription on polygamy and the duration of the union. Such a union is for life, although it may be terminated under certain conditions by recourse to the Court. One of the consequences of a statutory marriage is that the parties are precluded from resorting to native law for the purpose of dissolving such a marriage (Phillips, 1953), p.294). Where a marriage entered into in terms of the Ordinance is not contracted in a District Office but in a registered place of Christian worship licensed for marriage, the permanent and sacramental nature of the union is enhanced. A statutory marriage is absolutely and completely dissolved by the death of one of the spouses and when a marriage is thus dissolved the immediate effect is to put an end to all its legal consequences /

consequences (Phillips, 1953, p.287). This contrasts with the traditional system whereby ultimate rights in respect of a woman are held by the husband's lineage group, to whom they revert when he dies.

Among the most important legal consequences of a statutory marriage are those concerning inheritance. The view most commonly accepted by British colonial courts is that, in the absence of express enactment to the contrary, a statutory marriage has the effect of placing the parties outside the operation of native customary law in so far as property rights are concerned (Phillips, 1953, pp.280-281); that is, non-indigenous laws of inheritance are made applicable to the personal property, and to some extent to the real property, of a party to a statutory marriage. Inheritance of the property of a person who dies intestate, leaving a widow or a husband or any issue of such a marriage, is determined in accordance with the same principle as English law with two important reservations:

- (a) Any portion that would by the Law of England become the portion of the casual hereditary revenues of the Crown shall be distributed in accordance with the provisions of native law and custom.
- (b) Real property, the succession to which cannot by native law and custom be affected by testamentary disposition shall descend in accordance with provisions of native law and custom. (Phillips, 1953, p.284).

By /

By native law and custom real property is possessed by the lineage group as a corporation and may never devolve upon the surviving spouse who is, by the rules of exogamy, a member of a different lineage. Personal property is usually inherited by children of the same sex as the deceased.

The Conjugal System.

The insistence on monogamy, the obstacles in the way of divorce, the question of custody of the children in the event of a divorce which is ruled by the provisions of English law, rather than by the principle of lineage unity, the non-indigenous principles governing the devolution of property, the position of comparative independence of widows and the enhancement of the legal status and rights of women: all these things operate to the detriment of what Phillips (1950) distinguishes as the group element in favour of the personal element in marriage. Marriage under the Ordinance, then, involves certain legal requirements the results of which are among the factors influencing the emerging system of kinship and marriage.

A functional analysis of this new system must be prefaced by some explanation. In the first place I am to a certain extent assuming a hypothetical type. The comparatively small numbers involved and the experimental nature of the contemporary Yoruba situation imply that the discussion is really concerned with trends and with /

with the prognosis of significant behaviour patterns. The second point to emphasise is that the new system - if system it may be called - is operating within the matrix of the traditional system. The most important tendency is the habilitation of the domestic group at the expense of lineage solidarity and the emergence of a predominantly conjugal (as opposed to lineage) system made up of interlocking domestic groups. The major distinction between this and, say, the American type (cf. Parsons, 1954) - which is also a conjugal system - is the presence of important terminologically recognised units cutting across the domestic groups including some members and excluding others. These units are the lineages. However, there is a growing generalisation of kinship relations together with the formation of an indefinite network of relatives. This process is accompanied by a significant change in Terminology. Idile is often used to denote kin or relatives with no reference to lineage affiliation. Put in another way, there is a unification of the conception of the kin group and, with less emphasis on the paternal lineage as distinct from the maternal lineage, there is a tendency to consider it as a bilaterally undifferentiated body. Speculation might suggest a rationalisation of the system to conform with the traditional terminological bilateralism.

From the point of view of the individual the
core /

core of the kinship system is constituted by the domestic group. The status of the individual within the domestic group changes with time and this change is bound up with the developmental cycle of the domestic group (cf. Fortes, 1958) and with the establishment of a new group.

Amongst the Yoruba the trend is towards a re-organisation of kin into those who are members of the same domestic group, at first parents and siblings, later spouse and children, and those who are not. This contrasts sharply with the traditional Yoruba structuring in terms of unilineal descent groups. The narrowing of the range of effective kinship relations is accompanied by certain indicative changes in terminology. A distinction is made between baba, kinsman of the first ascendant generation, and dadi, own father. Similarly iya is often replaced by ma mi, the use of which is becoming confined to very nearly related women of the first ascendant generation such as the siblings of parents or to the mother herself. Other women of this generation are called aunti. Among sisters, first cousins and very intimate friends the reciprocal term sisi is used, while 'cousin' is applied to other collaterals. In other words, there is a growing terminological separation of relatives outside the domestic group, father becoming specifically distinguished from his collaterals and so on.

The principle of the structural relation of interlocking domestic groups is founded on the fact that, as /

as a consequence of incest proscriptions, the individual is always a member of two domestic groups. Moreover, he is the only common member of the two groups. Following Talcott Parson's analysis of the American system of kinship and marriage (1954) these two groups may conveniently be treated as constituting the core of the kinship structure. In terms of the individual, each member of this core is the connecting link with one - and only one - other domestic group. Each of these groups of the second degree are different, that is, the individual cannot be related to one of these secondary groups by more than one bond of relationship.

The first pair of articulating domestic groups, which may be called first ascendant, are the families of orientation of the individual's parents. Each consists of grandparents and parents' siblings. The significance of the lack of terminological distinction between paternal and maternal lines has already been noted. The only important exception to this bilateralism lies not in the kinship terminology but in the patrilineal inheritance of the surname which, since the adoption of European patterns of naming, has given rise to a unilateral name inheritance. The tendency to establish an agnatic name line extends back over only three to four generations within a very small section of the population, but the practice of adopting the father's name as cognomen is spreading rapidly. Because of the relative recentness of /

of the changes under discussion I cannot refer to still higher ascendant generations. It seems probable that if the present trends continue, it will be possible to apply the same principle of lack of lineal distinction to intervening relatives of ascending generations. It is perhaps more accurate to speak of a multilineal rather than a bilateral system. Any one of an indefinite number of lines of descent might in such a situation be treated as significant. In fact, the traditional system reinforces a slight emphasis on the patrilineal line.

The same fundamental principles govern the relationships of the individual with the first collateral domestic groups - those with which he is related through his siblings - and with the first descendant groups - those of his children.

The only domestic group to which the individual is bound not by descent but only by affinity is the family of orientation of the spouse. Every marriage, in founding a new domestic group, brings together two completely unrelated kinship groups which are articulated on a kinship basis only in this one particular relationship. Adopting a somewhat more generalised point of view, if all of the primary and secondary domestic groups are regarded as a system, it is articulated to another entirely distinct system of the same order by every peripheral relative, that is by every relative who is not a connecting link between the core and a secondary /

secondary domestic group. A consequence of this is a maximum dispersion of lines of descent and a structuring of domestic groups in terms of distance of degree from the core. In any finite population the lines of descent are bound to cross somewhere but the traditional laws of exogamy operate to keep this to a minimum and it is without structural significance.

Another way of viewing the structure is to recall that the individual's family of orientation and that of his spouse, that is, his affines, are both from the point of view of his children first ascendant domestic groups whose members are equally grandparents, aunts and uncles. This contrasts with the traditional system where the father's affines, although of importance as a secondary kin group, are structurally far removed from his children for whom his lineage remains the primary group. However, the slight patrilateral bias, shown by the lineal inheritance of the surname, yields a recognition of two elements, first a line of descent designated by ascendant and descendant family names, secondly an indiscriminate category of cousins into which all collaterals are thrown.

The Marriage Relationship

The most immediate interest centres in the structural significance of the marriage relationship, especially in relation to the lines of descent and to the sibling bend. The individual, by adopting this type /

type of marriage pattern, is, in comparison with the traditional system, drastically segregated from his lineage group as a whole and from his family of orientation. His first kinship loyalty is - ideally - to his spouse and to their children. Moreover, as Section 11 has shown, by virtue of an independent household, income and status, his family of procreation becomes a solidarity unit, while the segregation of his interests from those of his lineage tends relatively to minimise his identification with the latter. The strong emphasis on the marriage relationship at the expense of the lineage tie correlates directly with the symmetrical multilineality of the new system. From the point of view of the married pair, neither of the lineages nor either of the parental couples has structurally sanctioned priority of status. In one sense therefore the situation is one of a balance of power in which the independence of the domestic group is favoured by the maintenance of impartiality as between the two families of orientation.

From this it seems legitimate to conclude that in a peculiar sense which is not equally applicable to the traditional system the primacy of the marriage bond is the main structural principle of the new kinship system. This results from the spatial and social isolation of the domestic group and the attenuation of lineage /

lineage ties. Closely related to this situation is the question of choice of marriage partner. It is an open system in that there is no preferential or prescribed mating on a kinship basis (cf. Parsons, 1954) and there is a very strong tendency to a pattern of purely personal choice of marriage partner without decisive parental influence. With increasing mobility of a geographical, occupational and social kind, freedom of choice is becoming the dominant pattern. Since a marriage is not structurally of significance in terms of re-ordering of relationships within an already existing kinship unit or between two corporate descent groups, the primary structural reasons for an important influence on marriage choice being exerted by the kin of the prospective spouses are missing or at least minimised. Although not positively required by the kinship structure, freedom of choice is not impeded by it.

In an earlier section (Section 10 above) note was made of the lack of affective expression in the traditional system through the restricting forces latent in a strongly integrated group with a highly formalised status system. If, as Parsons points out, these restrictive forces have a positive functional significance in maintaining the solidarity of the compound group, in the new conjugal system this kind of institutionalised support is unnecessary. The structural isolation of the /

the new type of domestic group tends to free the couple from a whole series of restrictions on affective expression. At the same time the new element of personal choice of marriage partner lays emphasis on mutual attraction and love.

The Lineage versus the Domestic Group

What are the implications of this ideal system in terms of interpersonal behaviour? It has been pointed out that the emphasis on the primacy of the domestic group is leading to an alteration in the relationship with other kin. The new domestic group is analogous in structure to the traditional domestic unit but they differ in the social and economic independence of the former. More specifically, the mobility of the population and the new residential patterns (cf. Fadipe, 1940, pp. 130, 245-6, 247) leads to an exclusion of the lineage - and, indeed, of the families of orientation of the spouses - from the affairs of the domestic group (cf. Ward, 1938, p.29). Even where a man builds his house on compound land, although propinquity ensures the maintenance of over-riding lineage authority, the new privacy gives a domestic liberty unknown in the traditional compound existence. At the same time this spatial separation is reinforced by an economic and occupational individualisation. The close economic interdependence of the lineage is disrupted where the individual /

individual may become economically independent. The result is that, with the substitution of occasional for continuous contacts, lineage obligations are becoming progressively more attenuated.

One example of the diminuation in the rights traditionally held by the lineage as a corporate group, in favour of the individual, may be seen in the procedure which now accompanies divorce in the native courts. An important feature is the return of all or part of the idanan. It is significant that the transfer of money which signifies the transfer of rights in the woman from the former husband is a personal transaction involving only the parties concerned, without reference to the respective lineage groups. It is also extremely significant that in some cases it is the woman herself who pays the money.

The new conjugal independence is emphasising the inherent differences between a wife and her affines. With the re-orientation of the husband's interest towards wife and children a conflict is coming into view. The social super-ordination of the womenfolk of the husband's lineage is resented by married women who object to attitudes of respect and obedience expected by traditionally minded young sisters-in-law.

A girl of 28, a certificated teacher trained in England married a chemist, the brother of her best friend, a girl who is two years younger than the teacher. The latter is therefore the senior by age although she is now, because of her marriage to her friend's brother, the /

the junior in status. This is a sore point and the teacher is chagrined by the attitude of older relatives and affines who think it shameful that she refuses to accord to her husband's sister the traditional prerogatives of a sister-in-law.

On the other hand, the lineage members and the mothers resent the wife as an interloper who is seducing their boy from them. This resentment is especially alive in cases where a young man from a conservative lineage marries an educated bride monogamously, that is, in terms of the Marriage Ordinance. His kin resent her. If she proves unsatisfactory in any way they seize on this with avidity to try to prejudice the husband against her. If her fault lies in her infertility his kin may "marry" a young girl for him by native law and custom : they will pay the bride-wealth and instal her in another house. It is recognised that an Ordinance marriage is some sort of statutory bar to a further union, but the recognition tends to be vague and inaccurate. Apart from the kin group's desire that their son become a patriarch, there is also the hope that with the two women to divide his interest the man's first allegiance will return to his kinsfolk.

The antagonism between a wife and her affines in the new situation of conflict of expectations reaches its highest pitch in relation to her husband's mother. The wife now expects to be the first care and interest of her husband. On the other hand, there is a tendency for a middle-aged or elderly woman to become emotionally detached from her husband and to transfer her attachment to /

to her sons. It has already been noted that it is her adult son who is traditionally the one to whom a mother turns for sustenance and shelter in her old age. At the same time, in terms of traditional compound structure, the mother has far higher status than the wife, with all the authority that this implies (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.256). The result is a situation where the mother sees in the wife a threat to her old age security and a rebellious subordinate, while to the wife the mother-in-law becomes someone who is always ready to interfere in matters which should be the concern only of husband and wife.

Both Mrs. A and her husband are Nigerian trained teachers in primary schools. They now live in a rented house, but at the start of their marriage they lived in Mr. A's natal compound. Mrs. A complained that it was impossible to remain there as she could not fulfil the traditional subservient role of iyawo. She had many disputes with her mother-in-law - in itself a revolutionary departure from the behaviour of a junior wife. The mother-in-law was a charcoal seller and wanted her daughter-in-law to assist her in her trade when Mrs. A returned home from school. The old woman could not understand that it would not be suitable for one in her position as an educated woman, a headmistress, to be seen hawking charcoal in the streets and markets. The mother-in-law also insisted in investigating and criticising the domestic budget of the young couple.

Often, however, a wife who is employed will compromise and show the deference which is traditionally expected of /

of her. For, apart from other considerations, a friendly mother-in-law may be a useful ally and an asset as a person who will tend her grandchildren with care and solicitude while their mother is at work. The next example illustrates a case in which adaptation of an educated wife to the husband's illiterate relatives was successfully effected. It will be noted that the adaptation consisted essentially of a removal from the potentially conflictual situation and a reduction of contacts to manageable proportions.

Mrs. S's husband, now dead, was an ambitious teacher who wished to start his own commercial college.¹ Before their marriage, with her agreement and encouragement, he did not present any gifts beyond the minimum necessary to make the union legal according to native law and custom. This aroused the scorn of her kinsfolk who were generally against the match. However her father's eldest brother admired Mr. S and permitted the marriage. When they were married he was, happily, posted to a school in another town so that they were both removed from contacts with their kin-groups. On her visits to his natal compound she would wear her oldest wrapper and perform with alacrity the customary obeisance and chores. She admitted, however, that had she had to live there she would have found it impossible to continue behaving in this way. Her mother-in-law was loud in her praise and rejoiced in obtaining a daughter-in-law who combined the traditional virtues with the modern attribute of education.

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1. Equivalent academically to a secondary modern school. Although the standards of these colleges vary tremendously their prestige in Nigeria is invariably high.

On the permanent return of Mr. and Mrs. S to the town they had saved enough money to build a school and house on land away from the lineage compound.

Although legal and Christian prescriptions favour the conjugal orientation there is still a wide-spread recognition of basic loyalty to the lineage and to the kin as a whole. To a certain extent the individual remains subject to checks and controls not only from his lineage but from all his kinsfolk and friends. More or less close contacts are still kept with relatives; gifts and money are exchanged; visits are paid and received; attendance at kinship festivities and celebrations such as naming ceremonies, and weddings and funerals is still obligatory. In this intercourse no attention is given to social status, the unity of kinship surmounting all class barriers. The extent to which kinship obligations are honoured reveals social pressures still strong enough to exact compliance. The obligations are often commuted into monetary form (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.423) and comprise contributions towards the maintenance of indigent or aged relatives and towards the education of young relatives. Nevertheless, where contacts are maintained and obligations fulfilled, a strain is put on the loyalties of the individual and on his resources. In spite of the social pressures brought to bear the tendency for the individual's first duty to be towards the /

the spouse and children is growing. It is clearly recognised that duties to the lineage are incompatible with duties to the conjugal unit, and although there is still a certain measure of compliance this is steadily being reduced to the minimum and the conjugal bond is being given precedence.

The Husband-Wife Relationship

The separation of the domestic unit from the lineage resulting from the siting of many of the new dwellings on remote government residential areas and modern suburbs, and the isolation of the individual in the large heterogenous populations of the towns join husband and wife in a much more intimate association (cf. Ward, 1938, p.28). Their interests and their life become more closely identified. Thus as the lineage tie is weakened, the conjugal bond assumes a greater importance. A different conception of marriage is growing up. Husband and wife look to one another for co-operation in the joint enterprise of making a home (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.280). Community of interests and activity leads to a deepening companionship and the polarity between the sexes is being slowly reduced to a minimum or - in isolated cases - replaced by an idea of partnership, perhaps in order to relieve the feeling of isolation which the new individualisation brings.

There are, however, two factors which prevent a full development of this tendency. In the first place, the /

the traditional dichotomy between the affairs of men and of women still holds good. This attitude is transferred to leisure or social activities. At any public function or gathering there is little fraternising between men and women, and, in fact, men pass most of their leisure-time away from home, where they have left their wives. Secondly, one of the main determinants of membership of the new voluntary associations and the important social cliques is still sex. The great barrier against social intercourse between men and women remains. Nevertheless, if the ideal of marriage as a companionship between the partners is rarely realised, there are a certain number of cases where the husband and wife have a sense of responsibility to one another and to their children.

A woman whose husband is of high socio-economic status but who does not herself possess high educational qualifications may be particularly penalised by the residential isolation. She may live in a house several miles from the centre of the town and the market with no other company than her children and the servants. Away from the bustling, noisy and inquisitive compound she achieves privacy: she also has loneliness thrust upon her. Nor can she remedy this by frequent journeys into town. The husband will be using the car to get to work or to go in search of amusement. Public transport facilities /

facilities are inadequate or non-existent. In such a case the woman may become too emotionally dependent upon her husband, who because of his other interests, may not reciprocate the attachment. A much greater psychological strain is therefore put on the wife.

The Status of Women

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However, most women work. A professional woman is indeed under a moral obligation to take up some appointment in which she will put her talents and training to good use in the development of the country and the assistance of her "less fortunate sisters". The desire of most women is to be financially independent of their husbands. To a remarkable extent they achieve this desire. Modern economic circumstances impose on everyone the need for ready cash and a woman finds it embarrassing and degrading to have to ask her husband for every penny she wants or to account for all she has spent. In addition, other things besides consumer goods must be bought, not least of which is education. Most women want to give their children a good education and this entails spending a lot of money. Men may have other financial burdens to bear. They may be polygamists and find it impossible to provide each child with the desired training. Or they may be contributing to the support of some older/

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1. In a recent Urban Consumer Survey (1957, p.11) it is stated that a high proportion of households had more than one income-earner as large number of wives engaged in trading activities and contributed, however little, to the household income.

older relative or paying for the education of a member
¹
 of the lineage. At the same time the cost of living
 rises proportionally with the standard of living. Women
 must play their part in coping with the household expenses
 and preparing their children for the future.

Most men would prefer their wives not to work,
 although their financial assistance is often necessary.
 Women complain that while a man will enjoy the results
 of their work he will not adjust to the new division of
 labour in the household. A woman and her husband may be
 doing the same type of work during the day but when they
 get home in the evening the woman has to start on her
 household chores, looking after her home, children and
 husband with no assistance from the latter.

Financial independence brings with it a virtual
 independence in other spheres which is not, however,
 socially recognised. In her youth no woman may remain
 unmarried or unattached. It is incumbent upon her to
 marry or to form some sort of irregular alliance which
 rates as a marriage in the present fluid state of Yoruba
 society. By entering into a union with a man she has
 in fact achieved a new status which carries with it the
 right - if not the duty - to bear children. If with this
 status she can combine occupational success matured by
 age /

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1. It must be remembered that a woman also has kinship obligations which she must try to fulfil. As one young woman put it, "It is still felt that education is a sort of favour accorded to a woman and an educated woman is under a considerable obligation to help her kinsfolk.

age, she may in time become a person independent of her husband, with her own house, her own property and her own life. To a strong minded, forceful and successful woman who despairs of attaining the ideal companionate marriage the three desiderata of a husband are that he marry her, give her children and thereafter allow her to lead her own life without interference. Such a conception of marriage, although in some ways in the tradition of the division of male and female interests, would have been unthinkable in the traditional system of wifely subordination and represents one resultant response to an ambiguous situation where two different and irreconcilable systems exist side by side.

Although the inferior status of women is still generally taken for granted by men, this is no longer accepted without question by the women. Bascom (1951, p.504) points out that the social status of a woman traditionally depends on that of her male relatives. In the occupational sphere, however, she may now achieve a high status on the basis of her own merits. A similar change is apparent in her legal status. In the traditional system a woman never achieves full legal capacity. Johnson (1921, p.116), in a passage already quoted, states that every woman must have a male protector who is responsible for her. We have seen that this extends to responsibility in law. The introduction of law based on the English model, with its conception of woman as a responsible person in law, has enhanced her legal /

legal status. The influence may even be felt in native law and custom, where a woman may now repay the idanan to her husband herself, if she wishes complete independence. Thus the traditional notion of a woman as the creature of a man, be it father or husband, has altered fundamentally.

Nevertheless the feeling that man is by nature the dominant creature is still very much alive. Of 150 school girls only three stated categorically that men and women were created equal. While all aspired to improved status vis-à-vis men, the ultimate authority of the latter was not denied. The position might best be summed up by the statement of one young girl who wished to have a companionate type of marriage with herself looked on as an equal partner but with the final decisions resting with the husband to whom respect should always be shown - a paradoxical position not so very far removed from that which is implicit in the British husband-wife situation.

Even in the monogamous marriages of educated couples the final authority of the husband is not disputed. Although not de jure, the husband's consent is still de facto necessary before a wife may buy land, build a house or plan their children's future, even if she is fully independent financially. A husband decides if his wife shall work or not - even which invitations she may accept.

Parenthood /

Parenthood

With the strengthening of the solidarity of the domestic group the father takes a greater interest in the personality of his child and in the proper provision of education. However, a man's desire to provide the best education and training for his child may conflict with his responsibilities towards members of his kinship group. Apart from these obligations the cost of living above a certain standard is high. It is usually necessary therefore for a wife to augment the domestic resources in order to provide suitably for her children. For this, if for no other reason, a woman is prepared to work. Faced with the alternatives of staying at home to bring up her children herself, or ensuring them a proper education by leaving them in order to earn some money, she has no hesitation. It is a widespread belief that anyone can look after a child: a mother's first duty is to procure the means of educating it. But if one no longer lives in the compound there is no longer a reservoir of mother substitutes available. A young woman may be able to get her mother, mother-in-law or sister to care for her children. If this is not possible she must find someone else. She may employ a nursemaid; more often she obtains the services of a young boy or girl, usually distant relatives, in return for food and keep (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.269). Often the boy or girl is of school age and part of the bargain is that the mistress arranges and pays for education. Unfortunately in many cases this /

this part of the arrangement is ignored and the result is a deplorable system of domestic bondage.

A small number of the most progressive women are concerned by the effects of the loss of the close relationship, both physical and social, between a mother and her child. There is a growing feeling that a mother's influence is important during the child's early years and that an illiterate servant is not an adequate substitute. It is widely advocated that a woman should stop working and remain at home during the formative part of a child's life.

Children are still welcome at all socio-economic levels and the procreative aspect of marriage is still that most generally emphasised. Yet the economic liabilities which are the concomitants of having children and the decrease in infant and child mortality which accompanies improved conditions of living have led the members of the higher status group to limit the number of children. The optimum appears to be about four or five. Another reason for the interest in birth control is the relaxation in the prohibition on intercourse during the long period of suckling. This period of abstinence ensured a minimum of two years between births. Weaning may now take place at about six months or earlier, after which the baby is bottle-fed. This early weaning together with the monogamy which restricts a man's legitimate /

legitimate sexual access to one woman only, makes it possible that a woman will conceive within the traditionally proscribed period. In several cases where young couples have children with a difference of only one year in age the parents were embarrassed about it and their elders rather censorious (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p.248). To avoid such embarrassment many employ contraceptives.

Polygynous Households

In this section the discussion has largely centred upon statutory marriage, the pre-eminence of the domestic group and the modifying effect of the old system upon the new patterns of behaviour. However, the process does not operate in one direction alone. In many polygamous households the new influences are at work, disturbing certain relationships, strengthening others.

The position as regards co-wives has always been a rather precarious one. However, in traditional circumstances, with their economic homogeneity, there is less possibility that the delicate equilibrium of the ranking system with its balancing rights and duties may be disturbed. Inequalities of treatment beyond those socially prescribed should be rare. Under the new circumstances money is needed to provide for wives and children and it may be difficult for a man to provide for all. Often a choice must be made for example as to which child to send to school, which to keep at home on the /

the farm. The natural rivalry of the wives becomes exacerbated: jealousy and discord are the rule. This spreads to the children. The traditional bonds of the omo iya group are tightened, while the antipathy of half-siblings is heightened. At the same time the feeling towards the father becomes predatory. Each desires to mulct him of as much as possible. In this context the individual becomes more important than the inclusive domestic group. This is another response to a situation where two systems, each with its own set of values, co-exist.

Summary

Part IV is a description of contemporary trends of behaviour and a functional analysis of the modern ideal system of kinship and marriage. It shows the change-over from the traditional system which has as its dominant structural principle lineage solidarity and unity. In the new system loyalty is to the conjugal bond. This implies the emergence of the domestic group as the core of the new structure rather than as an ancillary to the unilineal descent group as it is in the traditional system. The re-orientation of the individual involves a change in the nature of his relationships not only with his spouse but also with his kinsfolk. It must, however, be remembered that the numbers /

numbers involved in the restructuring of kinship and marriage relations are very small, although, because of the high status and prestige of those concerned, of great significance as a reference group. This being the case, there is little definition of situations. Conflicting demands may place the individual in situations of great stress.

If this new system of kinship and marriage is to be regarded as one aspect of a trend towards specialisation of function the first question to be answered is what are the functions universally characteristic of the domestic group. Men and women marry with two main objects: to beget children and to satisfy the constant need for co-operation in the daily routine of life. In the traditional Yoruba system procreation and domestic organisation are regarded as important in the light of perpetuating and maintaining the lineage. Their efficient performance is judged in this perspective. In the new system the domestic group - from being an ancillary of the lineage - assumes prime structural importance. The two basic objects - from being subordinate to lineage requirements - become autonomous and the domestic group becomes a specialised agency with the prime function of satisfying them.

PART V

CONCLUSION

SECTION 13

THE GENERAL SITUATION

Social Change

Urbanism

Social Control

Domestic Organisation and the New Social
Categories

The Peasant Farmer

The "Money Man"

The Clerk

The Senior Service Man

Section 13 comprises a brief examination of the variant conditions under which the changes in the Yoruba social structure are taking place. Section 14 is a recapitulation of the variable elements of the structure which have been considered in former sections and a summary of the conclusions reached.

Social Change

Before discussing the implications of the social changes taking place among the Yoruba today, I should like to make clear the limits of this study. While an attempt is made to describe the functional interrelations of the traditional kinship system with other aspects of the social structure and to suggest the repercussions which attend changes in the latter, there is no pretence at anything approaching an exhaustive analysis of the economic, political or other systems. At the same time I am not seeking to isolate any one factor as instrumental /

instrumental in the process of change, although I believe that it is above all the presence of the modern occupational system and its mode of articulation with the domestic group which accounts for the loss of the traditional functions of the lineage. However, as Professor Ogburn, in his essay on the social effect of technology in industrialised societies (1952, pp. 269-279), shows so well, any influence towards change may act in a variety of different ways. A new activity may be introduced or an old one modified, not only in obedience to the direct reasons for its adoption, but often because it serves a number of different purposes. There is no simple causality, but a pattern of causes. Change is the result of converging influences and the resultant itself may have many /

many different social effects. The pattern of social change which emerges is that of a complex series of intercalary changes affecting a considerable portion of the network of interrelations between different parts of society.

Urbanism

There is among the Yoruba today a situation in which inter-personal relationships are no longer typically formed on the basis of kinship and often not primarily friendship or residential proximity. The new bases of organisation reflect a discontinuity from the traditional to the modern in the nature of social organisation. Earlier it was suggested that it is this difference in the nature of social organisation and relationships which is the chief sociological distinction between rural and urban. What is it that turns an agglomeration of people into an urbanised community? It is not only a function of concentration of population or even of administrative and political ability. As Professor Bascom (1955, p.448) has pointed out, the Yoruba have been city-dwellers for a long period and Oyo has a long history of political administration, The urban character of a population then must be assessed not by its size or political complexity, but by qualitative criteria.

Four main indices of urbanism may be suggested. There is first of all an increase in physical mobility.

It /

It has been shown in section 8 how the traditional male occupations - farming and crafts - are linked with the static kinship group. The modern occupational system required mobility. This is one factor in the deterioration of control of the lineage-group over the individual.

A second index of urbanism is the increase in social mobility. Status is no longer recognised in the context of kinship. It is socially assessed with reference to the occupational structure of the whole society. Modern occupations are ranked in terms of money or of standard of education required. This implies a change from an ascribed to an achieved status system and the emergence of an embryonic class system. It follows that different behaviour patterns are associated with different social categories and this new diversity may be contrasted with the traditional unity and homogeneity. Thirdly, there is a new segmentation of roles. For example, the bale, the lineage-head, is the traditional intermediary between the living and the dead and performs ritual duties on behalf of lineage members. The new religions have encouraged the emergence of 'professional' priests whose role it is to attend to the sacred aspects of life. In the same way the traditional working pattern may serve as an example of the splitting up of roles. Those working together are, under traditional circumstances, kinsfolk. /

kinsfolk. In the modern situation, however, kinsmen no longer work together but may be employed by different and "non-kin" employers. Workers now rarely associate on the traditional basis of lineage but in trade unions or professional associations. Role segmentation may be looked on not only from the aspect of specialisation of roles but also as a multiplication of individual roles, that is, every individual has a number of roles rather than one composite role as a member of a kinship unit. There is, then, not only a new diversity of roles but also an individual complexity. Associated with role segmentation is our fourth index, delegation of rights and obligations. The kinship unit is no longer the functional unit in religion, economics, education or politics: it has delegated its duties to specialist agencies such as the church, the trade union, the school, the political party. It is this last index, institutional specialisation of function, which has provided the frame of reference within which I have examined the changes in the Yoruba social structure.

Urbanism may be viewed as a re-orientation of values or as a re-ordering of social relations. The serious impairment of the solidarity of the lineage and the emphasis on personal achievement implies the growing precedence of the interests of the individual. This contrasts with the traditional system where it is as a member /

member of the kinship group, not as an individual, that rights accrue. The trend towards individualisation is associated also with the institutional specialisation of function and interests in the urban environment. The co-operation that is essential to the traditional system becomes a mechanical process of interdependence rather than a social process of joint activity towards shared goals. The urban way of life demands in a high degree that relations among individuals be specific - that is, limited to the demands of a particular situation. As the nature of social relationships changes, so also do their number and intensity. The individual is no longer immersed in a kinship group where relationships are limited in number. He becomes an isolated unit whose dyadic relationships are no longer organised in terms of primary groupings but are characterised by mutual contractual interests or even by random contacts with strangers.

There is emerging, then, a type of social structure based on the association of individuals. One of its principal characteristics is the creation of contractual obligations in place of the relationship of persons united by kinship. This contrasts sharply with the traditional system where kinship is the determinant of social groupings; where the dominant principle is that of lineage solidarity and where all other /

other relationships, including the conjugal one, is subordinate to this solidarity.

The new type of organisation, which cuts across kin groupings, takes the form of voluntary associations such as church congregations and societies, occupational associations and guilds, trade unions, friendly or mutual aid societies, Masonic lodges, recreational and convivial associations for social purposes (cf. Fadipe, 1940, p. 792). This trend becomes apparent even in patterns of entertainment and hospitality. Traditionally, participants at festivities are kith and kin. Ceremonies which, under traditional circumstances, have implications of lineage or kinship solidarity, such as weddings, naming ceremonies or funerals, are now however used to establish bonds with non-kinsfolk. Kinship is no longer the basis of participation. At both formal and informal social functions those present include many who have no bonds of kinship but who associate because of mutual interests of education, occupation or prestige. Entertaining and invitations are extended reciprocally and are becoming a means of encouraging the solidarity of the new groupings.

Social Control

The process of urbanisation may be regarded as /

as a re-organisation of patterns of social control. Traditionally the Yoruba sub-tribes were each sufficiently homogeneous to produce a consolidated social structure capable of enforcing rules of conduct through habit, convention, coercion and the authority vested in unquestioned supernatural sanction. Now, however, this solidarity no longer obtains. Absolute prohibitions have lost their compelling force. New beliefs and new knowledge cast doubt and discredit upon the old. Traditional authority, with its emphasis upon the accumulated wisdom of the elders, is being challenged by the claims of the individual to independence of judgement based upon professional knowledge, financial independence and the mass acceptance of party political programmes. The former control groups have to a large extent disappeared. The authority of the lineage declines as the domestic group achieves functional autonomy; religious sanctions are losing their hold in a vast number of fields which they formerly controlled; the presence of collective opinion is less personal and exercises less immediate constraint with the shift from the gossip and other social pressures of the primary group to the anonymity of the town. For the individual the situation is essentially an experimental one in which he may make a choice in the patterning of his behaviour. An inevitable concomitant is a frequent attrition /

attrition of the individual's commitment to traditional social norms and his adherence to traditional values. However, with the deterioration of traditional forms of standardised behaviour, new forms develop. It is the professional, business and political groups which are now responsible for introducing new norms of behaviour. The rise of these groups, which form a new elite of so-called middle classes, is bound up with the development of a more complex and highly differentiated economy and with an increased demand for individuals having specialised knowledge. From the sociological aspect it is necessary to stress two points about these groups. In the first place they do not form one homogeneous grouping but comprise a number of groups capable of comparison only in terms of prestige and of their function as reference groups. This brings me to my second point. These groups are standard setters: they act as the arbitrators of received behaviour. They are also the innovators and must be seen essentially as agents of change in the contemporary situation. In this they contrast sharply with the traditional farming class which still makes up the greater part of the population and which may be regarded as maintainers of the traditional culture.

Domestic Organisation and the New Social Categories

A relationship between the pattern of domestic organisation and the social categories has been implicit throughout /

throughout the discussion. A question that might now be answered in greater detail is whether particular traits correlate in any regular way with specific social categories. There is in fact a close parallel between religion, education, occupation, standard of living and patterns of marital and kinship behaviour.

Of three main factors which have influenced Yoruba society deeply, Christianity, education and cocoa, the first appears to have had little direct effect but as a medium for communication and education its influence has been of great importance. The cash-crop has introduced a new occupational patterning and has provided, directly or indirectly, the where-withal for the education of many of the present professional and senior service men. Education and occupation, together with the present day accent on achievement, have led to new ways of living. Four main categories of social person may be isolated in present-day Yoruba society. The criteria for these categories are mainly socio-economic. There are:-

1. the small farmer or unskilled labourer class,
upholders of tradition;
2. the wealthy farmer, artisan, contractor or business
man class;
3. the clerk, primary schoolteacher or minor official
class; and
4. the professional or senior service class.

The /

The test of the value of a classification is always that significant propositions can be laid down concerning the objects or individuals placed in a given class which do not hold for those outside that class. This is true of the four categories suggested above. There are, however, certain reservations which must be borne in mind. In the first place the classes do not purport to portray the structure of contemporary Yoruba society, nor to serve as a system of hierarchical ranking. Secondly, they are neither completely separate nor exhaustive categories. What each of them represents is a cluster of traits which have a significant tendency to re-occur in combination.

The Peasant Farmer

This category includes the larger proportion of the population. In general a living is made by semisubsistence farming eked out by a commercial crop of cocoa or kola nuts and by the trading of the women. Residence is in the lineage compound to which a woman is brought on marriage. The authority of the lineage group and of its representative, the bale, is still active. However, there is a slight relaxation in lineage control over the individual and this has its effect on marriage. Although marriage is still an affair to be considered and consented to by the lineage there are fewer cases of marriage being arranged without the knowledge of the individuals concerned or against their /

their wishes. Polygyny is still valued and practised, and marriage is contracted according to native law and custom. Domestic organisation, economy and way of life remain in the traditional form. Religion may be traditional, Moslem or Christian. Education is prized as a ladder to high status and efforts are made to send at least one child from each domestic group to school.

The "money man"

The second category epitomises the success story. The money man has achieved his wealth by his own acumen and efforts, in some cases without the assistance and advantages of much of an education. On making good, the first project to be begun is the erection of an imposing storey house, built nowadays of concrete blocks. The interior fittings may not be very different from those in the compound although chairs, tables, and beds may appear. A car, its length in proportion to the affluence of the owner, is the next sine qua non. Marriage remains customary and polygamous, but the separation of habitation from the compound together with the easier financial circumstances leads to an amelioration in the lot of the womenfolk. If the husband does not conform to Western ideals of a loving companion, at least he is now in a position to leave the wives to their own devices freed from pressing money/

money worries and from the supervision of the compound. A woman has the opportunity to devote herself to her own trading ventures and may, in fact, rival her husband in her success. In general, however, the pattern of living is not much altered: traditional usages are maintained.

A more ambitious man of this category may have a goal other than mere financial success in sight. He may aspire to a higher status in modern Yoruba society. To achieve this his first step is to marry under the terms of the Marriage Ordinance an educated woman "of good family".¹ (He may also have a number of "outside wives".)

A "money man" tends to belong either to Islam or Christianity. Education is an economic possibility and most of the children attend primary school often secondary school. One of the most active ambitions of the women is to send their children to the United Kingdom and if the father cannot afford it the mother often devotes her not inconsiderable talents to finding money.

The Clerk.

The clerk type is a man who may have received a secondary education. His income is above that of a peasant/

1. This term implies a kin group which includes a number of individuals of education and substance, preferably over a period of two or more generations. It may also indicate close consanguinity with an oba.

peasant farmer but rarely moves higher than £300 per annum. If a man of this category cannot raise the capital to build a house of his own, he may rent a room or an apartment of rooms in a storey house. He copies the European type of furnishings, chairs, tables and beds. A radiogram is added to the list of necessities of life. Marriage is generally monogamous and conjugal loyalty tends to be more important than lineage obligations, although the latter will be met should a request be made. His wife will generally have attended at least primary school and the aim of the couple will be to give their children a better education than they themselves enjoyed.

Marriage for this group becomes an individual affair. While final sanction of a proposed union must be obtained from the parents, the two people concerned demand full freedom of choice. There is between the man and the woman a deep feeling of affection and community of interests. In a society with potential social mobility this socio-economic level is often one of the stages on the way to higher status. A man and his wife may co-operate loyally to provide the means for the man to further his educational and social advancement.

The religion of the greater number of this group is Christianity, although a number are Moslems. By historic accident Christianity and education were associated. Islam appeared at about the same time as Christianity /

Christianity and offered to its converts a different ideology. For long, education, the prerogative of the Christians, and Islam seemed irreconcilable. This arbitrary distinction is now disappearing but its effects are still visible in the fact that most educated men and women are Christians.

The Senior Service Man

The senior service group, which forms a very slight proportion of the people, comprises the professional men and those in the higher ranks of the Public Service. It implies a university education or its equivalent, usually in Europe or the United States. Many of the people within this group have become completely westernised; that is, their homes, their furnishing, their eating habits, their domestic lives and their leisure time interests and activities resemble those of any European of professional status.

Almost invariably marriage is monogamously contracted in terms of the Ordinance. Wives are usually of a similar educational background as husbands. The shift from marriage as a subsidiary to lineage organisation to the conjugal unit as the basic unit of organisation is marked. The bonds of kin are still strong but a man's primary obligation is to his family of procreation. There is in marriage a verbal emphasis on affection, companionship and emotional security, although in practice this is not always achieved.

Children /

Children attend primary and secondary school and have every chance of further education. Formerly it was the ambition of rich parents to send their children to school in England. It is now considered unpatriotic to deprive children of a Yoruba environment and to produce adults with little knowledge of Yoruba culture. Children are now educated in Nigeria and sent abroad only after they have attained years of discretion.

A short consideration of the four categories described above suggests that they might be thought of as corresponding to intermediate stages on a continuum which has as its poles, on the one hand the traditional system where the lineage is the principal functional unit, on the other a system in which each function is performed by a specialised agency.

SECTION 14SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The material has shown that in traditional Yoruba society the lineage is the unit of social action. Schwab (1955, pp.355-6), speaking of the Yoruba town of Oshogbo, states explicitly, "Apart from the usual differentials of sex and age, membership in an idile (lineage) is the primary determinant of an individual's social, economic and political role. The idile forms the basis for association in the residential unit, the compound."

In the sphere of economics lineage affiliation plays a preponderant part. For most men it determines occupation. Although work is not organised on a communal basis within the lineage group, economic relationships and obligations to exchange services and goods extend beyond the basic unit of production to embrace the whole lineage group. In the same way, although education is primarily a function of the domestic group, it is a duty imposed on the whole lineage to see that its new members are properly trained and prepared for life. The importance of lineage affiliation has also been demonstrated in the organisation of ancestral and other religious worship. Yoruba religion may be viewed as comprising two main parts, the ancestor cult which is co-terminous with the lineage, and orisha worship which may be, but is not necessarily, determined by lineage membership. Although a single lineage tends to worship one/

one orisha, the cults are not mutually exclusive and an individual may serve several gods simultaneously. In the political system, in so far as married female members are not resident in the lineage compound, the lineage group is not in fact completely co-incident with the unit of political representation. Nevertheless, since within the compound it is the lineage group rather than the domestic group which is dominant, it may be accepted that politically the lineage is the basic political unit. Marriage is seen essentially in its procreative function and the marital relationship receives its sanction in terms of the provision of new lineage members.

It is upon this coherent system that factors promoting change have impinged to produce a new condition, urbanism, which is characterised inter alia by a specialisation of function. Occupation is now determined by individual ability and training and the modern economic system with its high degree of differentiation takes over the functions of controlling resources and organising production. The school, the college, the university, provide formal education to equip the individual for participation in the economic system. The Christian churches provide organised religion and it is no longer the most senior lineage member who intercedes with/

with the deities but a professional priest. The political function is taken over by political party and government organs, the latter providing among other things social and welfare services once solely the functions of the lineage group. Southall (1956, p.581) points out that "many of the most significant changes under urban conditions may be expected to appear in the field of marriage and family life" and the institutional specialisation of function may perhaps best be illustrated by the change in the status of the domestic group which becomes virtually independent of the lineage and achieves structural importance in the emerging kinship system. With the new emphasis on the solidarity of the domestic group there is a tendency for the nature of the conjugal relationship to alter and the ideal becomes a companionate type of marriage.

The change-over is not, however, complete and there is in Yorubaland to-day a situation where both the traditional and the modern systems co-exist and blend into each other. In the rural districts the dominance of the lineage remains to a certain extent, while there are sectors of the population, notably in Lagos, where a high degree of emancipation from the lineage organisation is reached. It was pointed out in Section 1 that this was/

was to be a synchronous study, the variations occurring in a situational dimension. Thus, given certain conditions, certain conduct may be appropriate in one situation, not in another. An excellent example of this is the case of a professional man of high social status who is married monogamously under the Marriage Ordinance, but who has entered an irregular union. At official functions his legal wife accompanies him: on occasions of lineage significance such as naming ceremonies he may be accompanied by his outside wife in addition to or instead of his legal wife.

It must not be thought that this process of functional specialisation is peculiar to the Yoruba. Other studies, while not directly concerned with the subject, contain data which offer interesting comparisons with the situation in Yorubaland. Most urban centres owe their existence to economic or political developments and the existence of an urban economy implies the attrition of this function of the kin group. Hellmann's (1956) article on South Africa, Busia (1950) on Sekondi-Takoradi, Lombard (1954) on Cotonou, Pons (1956) on Stanleyville are only a few showing how large heterogeneous populations have been attracted to the towns by the opportunities there for employment and how the domestic group appears to be the kinship unit most compatible with life in an industrialised urban area.

In/

In the same way most urban studies show how the Christian churches have taken over the religious function of the kin group. Speaking of Sekondi-Takoradi Busia (1950) mentions the important role of the Christian faith, as does Pans (1956) of Stanleyville. Hellmann (1956) specifically mentions the loss of religious function suffered by the traditional kin group in South African urban situations.

The Sofers (1956), commenting on the disruption of the traditional kinship systems under the urban conditions of Jinja (East Africa) point out that this disruption inevitably affects the performance of the social functions of the kin group, taking as an example the socialisation of the child and describing how, concurrently with the breakdown of the extended family in the town, many socialisation functions have been taken over by other agencies, notably the schools. Hellmann (1956) makes the same point in considering the situation in South Africa.

Fortes (1948), among others, shows that under traditional circumstances each person's membership of the lineage or other kinship group determines his membership of and status in the community and his political allegiance, while under urban conditions with their ethnic and social heterogeneity other bases of political /

political affiliation must be found.

The new trend towards autonomy of the domestic group is well documented. The Sofers (1956) comment on the decline of the importance of the clan in Jinja, the trend towards monogamy and the emerging tendency to regard marriage as a relationship between two individuals rather than as an inter-group affair. Similar information is provided by Busia (1950) on Sekondi-Takoradi, Hellmann (1956) on South Africa, Doucy and Feldheim (1956) on two districts in the Belgian Congo, Banton (1957) on Freetown, Crabtree (1950) on the urban areas of Ghana, and Lombard (1954) on Cotonou. The last describes the general trend (op.cit. p. 356), "De tous temps, la famille a ete en Afrique la cellule sociale fondamentale. Autrefois, le menage n'etait qu'une fraction de la famille, sans personnalite ni autonomie. Aujourd'hui, sans avoir rompu totalement avec la grande collectivite, il tend a représenter principalement dans les villes, l'element essentiel de la vie familiale".

To conclude, the following quotation sums up the position among the Yoruba, as among other African societies in transition to-day.

"What in fact has happened under the impact of industrialisation and technical change is that life has become very much more specialised. In the towns, the /

the kin group is no longer economically self-sufficient, and in the rural areas its solidarity for the multiple tasks performed under the traditional system is seriously impaired by migration. The result is that a new social organisation has arisen which has taken over many of the activities previously carried on by the extended family and the lineage. There is now specialisation not only of economic activities but of all the principal activities of community life, including the care and training of children, religion, recreation, government, and mutual aid." (Little, 1955, pp. 283-4).

APPENDICES

APPENDIX IMarriage ExpensesCase 1

<u>Owo itoro</u>	£1	to fiancée's parents
Consultation fee	£1:10/-	consultation of Ifa oracle
Sacrifice fee	£2:10/-	to propitiate gods and ensure successful marriage
	£2	present to fiancée for <u>buba</u> (blouse)
Travelling expenses	£1:10/-	to fiancée's father
	£1	umbrella for fiancée
<u>Idanan</u>	<u>£12:10/-</u>	
	<u>£22</u>	

Case 2

Consent fee	£5:10/-	to fiancée's parents at <u>ijohun</u>
<u>Owo ore</u>	£3	"friendship fee" or gift to fiancée
Sacrifice fee	£2	
Funeral money	£4	to assist fiancée's father with expenses at death of latter's father
	£2: 1/-	gift of shoes to fiancée
<u>Idanan</u>	<u>£5:10/-</u>	
	<u>£27: 1/-</u>	

Case 3

<u>Owo obi</u>	£10:10/-	consent fee to fiancée's parents at <u>ijohun</u>
<u>Owo ore</u>	£7	"friendship fee" to girl
Sacrifice fee	£2	
<u>Idanan</u>	<u>£5:10/-</u>	
	<u>£25</u>	

Case 4

<u>Owo Ore</u>	£15	friendship fee
Sacrifice fee	£ 3	
	£ 3	to fiancée's father at time of Muslim festival
	£ 3	ditto
<u>Idanan</u>	<u>£10</u>	
	<u>£34</u>	

Case 5

<u>Owo itoro</u>	£ 2	to fiancée's parents
<u>Owo obi</u>	£10:10/-	consent fee to fiancée's parents
	£ 1	to head of fiancée's lineage
<u>Idanan</u>	<u>£ 5:10/-</u>	
	<u>£19</u>	

Case 6Owo obi

£1	consent fee at <u>ijohun</u>
£8	gifts to fiancée's parents
£3	yams and maize to fiancée's parents
£1	gift to her parents at festival time
£3	for buba and cloths for fiancée
£1	to fiancée's father at time of her older sister's marriage
£1	to fiancée and younger brother
£2	to fiancée's mother at time of festival
5/-	to fiancée

Idanan

<u>£5:10/-</u>
<u>£25:15/-</u>

Case 7

	2/6	first gift to girl on promise of marriage
	5/-	second gift
	9/-	4 bottles of beer to fiancee's father
	10/-	to fiancee's father at first meeting
	10/-	to fiancee's father to help settle a debt
	10/-	to fiancee's mother to help with funeral expenses of latter's sister
	12/6	to help with expenses of fiancee's sister's marriage
	10/-	to fiancee's father
Consultation fee	£2	
<u>Owo obi</u>	£5:10/-	
	£4:12/6	for native beer for fiancee's father
	18/6	for kola nuts for fiancee's father
	£1	return of gift to man to whom fiancee previously engaged
	10/-	gift to fiancee
	15/-	for head-tie for fiancee
	£1	gift to fiancee's father and mother
	£5	gift to fiancee
<u>Idanan</u>	£5:10/-	
	£30: 5/-	

Case 8 Prestations at the idanan of a daughter of
the Alake of Abeokuta.

(a) From the groom's representatives

- £1: 2/- "key" for the iyawo ile of the Alake's compound
£1: 2/- for the lineage members, omo ile
£1: 2/- for the ijoko agba or assembly of elders

(2/- each of the above sums was returned to
the groom's kin to be divided among the wives
of his father's and mother's lineages.)

- 2 bottles whisky
- 2 bottles Gordon's gin
- 2 bottles wine
- 2 bottles beer
- 4 bottles krola
- 2 coloured decanters filled with honey

(Of these items, half went to the bride's father's
kin, half to her mother's kin.)

- 42 kola nuts
- 42 bitter kola nuts
- 11 alligator peppers

(Also divided as above, with the exception of
two kola nuts and two bitter kola nuts returned
to groom's kin for division.)

For the bride herself:

- 2 lappas (one native-woven, one velvet)
- 1 ipele or waistcloth
- 1 gele or head-tie
- 1 iborun or shoulder cloth
- 4 buba (or blouses)
- Bible and ring
- 1 blue bag and 2 gns.
- 30 gns.

(b) In return the Alake gave

1 doz. bottles of beer	)	to be divided among the
1 doz. bottles of krola	)	bridegroom's paternal
140 kola nuts	)	and maternal kin
1 tin of biscuits)	
2 gns.)	
1 doz. bottle of beer	)	for distribution among the
2 tins of biscuits	)	<u>iyawo ile</u> , the wives of the
		bridegroom's lineage
1 doz. bottles of beer		for the <u>omo ile</u> , the members
		of the bridegroom's lineage
6 bottles of beer	)	for the <u>iya-iyawo</u> , the bride's
2 bottles of krola	)	classificatory mothers
2 tins of biscuits)	
2 bottles of whisky	)	for the <u>oko iyawo</u> , the agnates
4 packets of Pirates	)	of the bridegroom, together
(cigarettes)	)	with their friends.

APPENDIX II

- a. In 1952 the Egba local authority made a decision that no bride-wealth should exceed £20.
- b. In August 1956 the Ijebu Ode District Council enacted the Marriage, Divorce and Custody of Children By-Laws. These provide that:-
1. The limit of the bride-wealth should be £15
i.e. £2:10:0 - ijohun
£12:10:0 - idanan
 2. The amount recoverable by the husband in the event of divorce should not exceed £15.
 3. A woman should only be granted a divorce if the husband is found incapable of fulfilling his marital obligations or is suffering from venereal, contagious or chronic diseases. She may win a divorce on grounds of neglect or if the husband is imprisoned for five years or more, becomes insane or commits adultery.
 4. A man may divorce his wife if she neglects him or their children, commits adultery, is imprisoned for three years or contracts chronic or contagious diseases.
 5. Children shall be in the custody of their fathers at the age of five years "whether or not such natural father is married to the mother".

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